







THE NEW FOREST.

VOL. III.

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THE NEW FOREST.

A NOVEL.

BY THE

AUTHOR OF "BRAMBLETYE HOUSE," &c.

——— "This boy is forest-born,
And hath been tutored in the rudiments
Of desperate studies."

AS YOU LIKE IT.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

LONDON:

HENRY COLBURN, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

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THE NEW FOREST.

CHAPTER I.

Were I the fairest youth
That ever made eye swerve: had force and knowledge,
More than was ever man's, I would not prize them
Without her love.

THE WINTER'S TALE.

CUPID, in the meanwhile, had not been so exclusively occupied in promoting the mutual attachment of Emily and Henry within the walls of the forlorn, melancholy, old-fashioned Manor-house, as to neglect the extension of his empire in the gay and gorgeous saloons of Oakham-hall. Ringwood, availing himself of the oppor-

tunities afforded by his bringing flowers to Fanny, or shrubs and plants from his greenhouse, to assist in stocking the splendid new conservatory, in which the wealth of Mr. Frampton, and the taste of Lady Susan were, so conspicuously displayed, had so ingratiated himself, as to receive much more frequent invitations than formerly. The owner of the stately Hall was not displeased to have as an occasional visitant and participator in his costly dinners, a poor, reduced squire, not solely as a pleasant companion, but because his scanty means and paltry establishment seemed, by the striking contrast they afforded, to invest his own mansion with a more lordly magnificence. Lady Susan, with the insulting condescension of pride in disguise, finding that Ringwood, who was a good botanist, might be made useful in decorating her conservatory, now affected to commiserate his reverses, and took prodigious credit to herself for giving the poor fellow the run of the Hall, which, she had no doubt, was an object to him in his present circumstances. Augusta, whose keen observation quickly led her to suspect his predilection for Fanny, and who

had a profound horror of her younger sister being married before her, hated him by anticipation ; losing no opportunity of ridiculing him on account of the mean, vulgar style in which he lived, and always contemptuously terming him "the Farmer," for the amiable purpose of vexing her sister, who retorted upon Augusta, and defended "the Squire," as she uniformly called him, with a warmth and petulance that betrayed the deep interest she felt in his cause. Ringwood himself, naturally frank and open-hearted, cordial and social in his temperament, and quite competent to maintain his own dignity and independence, against the smallest encroachments from any quarter, held himself upon a footing of perfect equality, mingling in the festivities of the Hall with his accustomed cheerfulness, and never troubling himself about the motives that led to his increased intimacy, since the result afforded him such a facility of access to Fanny.

In the first instance, he had been struck with the fascination of her playful and expressive countenance, which, even if it could not be strictly termed handsome, he much preferred to the regular, stately, haughty beauty of her sister,

who seemed imperiously to challenge admiration as a right. In Fanny's artlessness, simplicity, fervour of honest feeling, and freedom from affectation, he found charms, rendered still more attractive, by a perpetual exhibition of their opposite qualities in Augusta. Both Mr. Frampton and Lady Susan being accustomed to treat Fanny as a child, not quite a simpleton, but an odd, strange, self-willed girl, of whom they should never be able to make anything, little dreamed of any body falling in love with her; and even had they contemplated such an occurrence, they could not for a moment have suspected that a daughter of theirs would fly in the face of her parents, by degrading herself to an union with a pauper, a character which she had always heard treated with peculiar contempt at Oakham-hall. Ringwood's attentions, therefore, to Fanny, pointed as they soon became, excited no other remark, than that it was very good-natured of him to take so much notice of her, coupled with an occasional expression of surprise at his finding any pleasure in her society. Thus favoured by circumstances, their mutual attachment was rapid in its pro-

gress, and congeniality of disposition equally tended to accelerate its growth. If the Squire was frank, straight-forward, and sincere, almost to bluntness, Fanny had a correspondent honesty of expression, a *brusquerie*, as Lady Susan called it, which, removing her to the very antipodes of coquetry, rendered it sometimes difficult for her to suppress her thoughts, or modify her expressions, so as to accord with the hypocritical courtesies and refinements of polished society. She liked Ringwood, she respected his character, she cared not a doit about his comparative poverty, for she had seen enough of riches at home to convince her that they conferred no happiness ; she felt honoured and elevated in her own opinion by the preference shown her ; and although no avowal was yet called for, since no explicit declaration had been made, she took little pains to conceal the predilection she entertained, and being quite satisfied as to her choice, was pre-determined to discard all affectation, and interpose no “ coy denial,” should Ringwood think proper to make her an offer of his hand.

That her parents might object to such an

union she thought extremely probable ; but as she detested all pride, whether of purse or pedigree, she was resolved, if no more valid objection could be urged against her suitor than his want of wealth, to consult her own happiness, rather than the projects of her ambitious parents, and accept him *sans cérémonie*. With all her childishness of appearance and playfulness of manner, there was a bold independence of mind about Fanny, where she felt herself to be in the right, which her parents, who still considered her in her leading-strings, were not a little surprised to discover, and which they stigmatised, when it became developed, with the names of obstinacy, self-will, and wrong-headedness.

A circumstance which favoured the uninterrupted maturing of the attachment between Fanny and Ringwood, was the return, at this period, of Captain Frampton, accompanied by his friend Lord Mossdale, whom he had invited to the Hall for the ostensible purpose of affording him a few weeks shooting in the Forest, but with the real design of inveigling him into a marriage with Augusta ; an object in which all

parties soon became too deeply absorbed, to trouble their heads about the growing intimacy between the Squire and the younger sister. His Lordship was young, rich, good-natured, and good-looking, without presenting any thing very patrician in his appearance, since he was unpretending, almost to carelessness, in his dress, and affected a rattling, easy sort of familiarity in his deportment towards high and low. When it is added that he was by no means deficient in understanding, and was nearly connected with an influential member of the administration, it is unnecessary to state that he had occasioned a prodigious competition among all the prudent and calculating mothers who had daughters to settle. No man had been so much invited, feasted, and flattered ; no man had been exposed to so many dead sets at his heart ; no man had contrived to extricate himself so uniformly and so adroitly from the toils that were set for him in all directions. This he had been enabled to accomplish, by penetrating, in the first instance, the secret motives of all the manœuvres and *finesse* that were directed against him. His established courage would not allow him to be bullied ; his

tact, as well as his awakened suspicions, prevented him from committing himself with any of the young ladies, by attempting to win their affections; and considering himself to be merely engaged in an amusing trial of skill, a game of attack and defence with the match-making mammas, he thought himself warranted in accepting their invitations, their professions of disinterested friendship, their feasts, and their flatteries, without the smallest present intention of accepting any one of their daughters.

He could not, therefore, but laugh in his sleeve, when he was so warmly pressed to visit Oakham-hall, knowing, as he did, Lady Susan's notorious resolves to procure a titled husband for Miss Frampton, the Tuft-hunter, as she was sneeringly nick-named in some of the London circles; and he was still more amused when, upon his arrival at the house, he noticed the palpable and pointed manner in which her Ladyship attempted to decoy him into the snare. Augusta's beauty, accomplishments, and amiability, were the perpetual theme of maternal eulogy; Augusta, dressed up in the most alluring style possible, was thrown in his

way, and placed beside him on all occasions ; she played upon the harp, she sang, she danced for his amusement ; Fanny was abased and disparaged, in order to elevate the favourite sister ; and a perpetual round of festivity was maintained, that Oakham-hall might be rendered as attractive as possible to a visitant, who being at once rich and noble, united the suffrages of both Mr. Frampton and Lady Susan. Although this succession of entertainments gave opportunities to Ringwood and Fanny for cultivating their mutual attachment, it failed in awakening any amorous wishes in the bosom of his Lordship ; who, before he had been a fortnight in the house, became equally sick of the designing mother, and of the cold, formal, stately, and artificial, though beautiful Augusta.

At the time of Lord Mossdale's arrival, Mr. Frampton, owing to his too free indulgence in turtle, punch, and claret, was visited with a severe fit of gout, which neither Mr. Tyson's infallible pill, nor the many bottles of wine which the bibulous apothecary drank at his patient's expense, had succeeded in dispelling.

Always testy, Frampton's habitual peevishness was increased by his malady, although he did his best to conceal his ebullitions of temper from his visitant. To facilitate this object, Lady Susan suffered Pompey the black to be as much as possible in attendance upon him; not only because his master found a pleasure in chatting with him about the West Indies, but because he wrapped up the gouty leg, or altered its position, with more patience and tenderness than any other, always excepting Fanny. Pompey, who from his utter ignorance of the profound homage expected from servants in England, was no great respecter of persons, was thus occupied one day, singing at the same time his favourite song about the overseer thrust into the copper of boiling sugar, when Lord Mossdale exclaimed as soon as he left the room—
“Positively, Mr. Frampton, you have a most extraordinary Esculapian to take charge of your gouty foot. The first fellow I ever heard of, since the days of Apollo, who sang songs and practised medicine at the same time. I like the creature's radiant smile and his white teeth,

but I can neither admire his shrill voice, nor enter into the joke, which he himself seems to enjoy with so much glee, of murdering an innocent overseer."

"That is so like you, my dear Lord!" exclaimed Lady Susan; "Wit and shrewdness, combined with humanity. Ay, the good heads and the good hearts always go together, I see. But what can you expect from such savages? This Pompey is a perfect nuisance in the house, quite useless too; does little or nothing but sing songs, and make pop-guns and playthings for the village children. I tolerate him on Mr. Frampton's account, for he really has a knack at managing a gouty foot, but I should be heartily glad if he were sent back again to the West Indies."

"The creature is not only insufferable from his disrespectful manner," said Miss Frampton, "but his being an odious black serves to remind people that my father is a West India Proprietor, a circumstance which might as well be kept in the back-ground. Then the fellow wants height, and does not match any of the

other footmen, and has no style in his appearance, so that our expensive liveries are quite thrown away upon him."

"'Pon my honour, that 's uncawmonly true !" drawled the Captain, gently passing his fingers through his scented hair,—“ the wretch doesn't look as if he belonged to a family of distinction. More like a great baboon dressed up, isn't he, Mossdale? Quite rideeculous, 'pon my honour !”

“ You know I always defend those whom every body else attacks,” cried Fanny ; “ and in behalf of my friend Pompey, I must observe, that you have overlooked two of his merits ; which, in my opinion at least, would outweigh a thousand greater faults than you have enumerated. First, he once saved my father's life, and now waits upon him in his illness with the most assiduous attention ; secondly, Pompey is a philosopher, for though he is banished, probably for ever, from his native country, though he is despised as a black among a nation of whites, and only fills a menial station, he is happier than any of those who look down upon him with pity or contempt.”

“The moment she opened her mouth I was quite sure Fanny was going to talk nonsense,” cried Lady Susan. “That black fellow a philosopher ! What folly !”

“As to such a penniless chap being a philosopher,” said Mr. Frampton, “that may be all stuff and rubbish ; but there’s a great deal of good sense in what the girl said about his saving my life, and managing my gouty foot. And I promise you one thing, Lady Susan, that neither your abuse of him, nor Augusta’s, nor any body else’s, shall prevail upon me to turn him out of the house, so you may as well all of you hold your tongues.”

“Does Miss Fanny venture to talk upon such an unfashionable subject as philosophy ?” inquired Lord Mosssdale, who saw that Frampton was out of humour, and good-naturedly sought to change the conversation.

“I am so far a philosopher, my Lord, that without understanding one syllable of the matter, I have endeavoured to jump to the great consummation at which all philosophy aims, since I am most stoically resolved to be as good a girl, and as happy a girl, as I can.”

“ Singularly modest, upon my word !” cried Augusta : “ and we are to have your own unimpeachable authority, I suppose, for your having succeeded in your aims.”

“ For the first, of my two objects, I must appeal to the superior powers. Please, Lady Susan !” exclaimed Fanny, going up to her mother and curtsying with a mock solemnity ; “ please give me a character, and certify that I am a good girl.”

“ Begone, you silly madcap ! I cannot afford you any such voucher, for you are constantly refusing to take the advice which I and Augusta give you.”

“ Are you quite, quite sure,” said Fanny with an arch smile, “ that this may not proceed from my firm resolution to be always good and happy ?”

“ Lady Susan refuses her testimonials,” said the Captain ; “ so you can’t prove your case ; you can’t now pawsitively, ’pon my honour !”

“ But Fanny will not acknowledge herself to be in the wrong, she never does,” said Miss Frampton.

“ Not now, Augusta, at all events ; for as my

character as a philosopher is at stake, I will maintain my point, and reduce you all to a dilemma. I said that I was happy, and as no one can judge of this but myself, so no one can contradict me."

"Oh! that we can admit, for thoughtless girls are always happy; but the question at issue refers to your goodness. How do you establish this point?"

"By the simple fact that I am happy; for as the human heart and conscience are constituted,—at least, I can answer for my own—I know that it is impossible to be perfectly happy without being good."

"Faith! there is real philosophy in that observation, as well as sound morality, ay, and pure religion too," said Lord Mossdale.

"Oh, my Lord; I talk so much nonsense in a general way," cried Fanny, "that I am obliged to blurt out something rational now and then, or I should be set down for a confirmed simpleton. Now that I have begun so luckily, I am determined to be profound and philosophical for the rest of the morning, and therefore—Gemini! there's Snowball upon the

lawn! My Lord, my Lord! do look at her. Did you ever see such a beautiful greyhound? She was given to me by Squire Ringwood. Oh, you frolicsome darling! I must positively have a game of romps with you.”—And so saying she scampered down-stairs, and was presently seen bounding like a young wood-nymph after Snowball, until both disappeared in the adjoining shrubbery.

“That is just poor Fanny’s odd, inconsistent-way,” observed Lady Susan: “making some rational observation that nobody expects from her, and then suddenly talking and acting like a silly romping school-girl. Well might Sir Nugent Clavering term her the inspired idiot.”

“Inspired she may be, but I’ll swear she is far enough from an idiot,” exclaimed Lord Mosssdale.

“It is a little like one too,” said Miss Frampton, “to run out without her bonnet such a damp day as this, which is sure to take every bit of curl out of her hair; and even if the grass is not wet, she will inevitably stretch her shoes, by running so fast in them; they will never again sit becomingly upon her foot,

for they are French shoes." The eyes of the speaker fell as if unconsciously upon her own remarkably small well-appointed foot, as it hung by premeditated accident over the edge of an ottoman; Lord Mossdale's eyes naturally took the same direction, and there was a momentary silence, for both Lady Susan and her daughter were careful not to interrupt him in so interesting a study.

"Augusta, my dear!" at length exclaimed the mother; "be so good as to step up-stairs and look for my vinaigrette, which I have somewhere mislaid." As the daughter won her way mincingly towards the door, bridling up her figure, and throwing back her head, the mother continued, "Really Augusta quite spoils one for backs, her's is such a very fine one, and the slope of her shoulders is so perfect. I may say this without any suspicion of partiality, for when she was presented at Court, the King himself, who is an admirable judge of such matters, made the same observation to my relation the Marchioness."

"Miss Frampton is in every respect extremely beautiful," said his Lordship.

“Oh! mere beauty is nothing, there are plenty of handsome girls about town; but Augusta’s distinguishing merit is the style of her face and appearance altogether, which is quite patrician, stamping her at once of the Corinthian order. She was evidently designed by nature to be a nobleman’s wife.”

“I wonder, then, that she never became one,” said Lord Mossdale, with a smile of malicious pleasantry upon his features, as he recollected her nick-name of the Tuft-hunter.

“She has had numerous opportunities, but Augusta is so *very* particular, so conscientious, I may say. She will never marry where she cannot bestow her heart; but whenever she fixes her affections, she will make a most exemplary wife.” Her ladyship was good enough to add, that after all, neither her daughter nor herself were fastidious in their choice, and then proceeded to paint a *beau ideal* of what they would both consider an eligible husband, drawing such a close likeness of his Lordship, that he instantly recognized his own portrait, and suddenly broke off the colloquy, lest he should be taken by storm, and forced into an offer of

his hand, before he could quit the window in which they were conversing.

The return of the Black servant into the room with the crutches, which he had been altering for his master, afforded Lord Mossdale a seasonable pretext for changing the conversation. "Pompey, my good fellow," he said, "we have been talking about the song you were singing just now. Does it relate to a real occurrence?"

"Iss, gemman, iss; ebery word all trute."

"How do you know; did you witness it yourself?"

"Iss, gemman, iss; Pompey tell oo all 'bout it."

"Say, my Lord, sirrah! and not gemman," cried Lady Susan.

"Bery well, my Lady. Oo lookee here, my Lord, and no gemman—oo listen a me. One day, da harwess time come on—smack, smack! go da whip, afore da sun poke him red nose out da sea—da bell ring—da conch blow—up jump Niggers, and bery glad too, 'cause harwess time, and no dam watchman hinder dem eat da sugee-canes. Bery well; ebery man take sharp bill,

cut down cane, make dem into junks, tie dem into bundle, toss dem in broad-wheel waggon; off go da mules, gee up! ge wo! crack! crack! crack! go da mills; bubble! bubble! go da coppers, and out come da flames from da boiling-house chimney. Gog! hot enough arout dat. Nebber mind da hot wedder. Da Niggers work, and laugh, and sing, and cut cane, and eat bit when nobody look, and load more waggon, when all sudden—bootiful wedder just now—lily black cloud come up out da sea, wind blow and whistle bery bad, canes swing-swang back'ard and forr'ard, and cocoa-nuts on da shore rattle and knock der heads togedder. What for? can oo tell dat, my Lord, and no gemman?"

"I suppose because a hurricane was springing up."

"O you clebber fellah! somebody tell oo. Iss, bad hurricane begin; so da mill stop to take off da canvas, an' da rope break, and he no come off; so da driber, what oo call da oberseer, order great Cormantee Nigger, called Papaw, climb to end of da mill-wing, to take off da canvas. But da wind blow poor fellah

from da mill, and he fall to da ground, bery mush bruise; and da bad mahn oberseer come up in great passion and floggee poor Papaw, when he no able to crawl away. Gog! who ebber tink of sush a ting? So Papaw wait till he strong, and den watch da oberseer when he go up da ladder, look at da boiling copper, and den come behind him ' and push him into da copper, smack!—Buckara, buckara, cracko!' so dere he got a hickory-nut to crack; an' so dat's da whole story, my Lord, and no gemman."

" And considering the provocation poor Papaw received," said Lord Mossdale, " I should be inclined to call his offence a justifiable homicide."

" Come, Mossdale!" cried the Captain, " if you talk to Pompey about the West Indies, he'll tell you stories all day long. The fellow's a monsous bore, quite abawminable, 'pon my honour! The gamekeeper's waiting, shall we take our guns, and look after some phaisants?"

" With all my heart," said his Lordship, and making his bow to the ladies, he quitted the room, and sallied forth towards a distant pre-

serve, accompanied by the Captain. "A devilish odd girl, that sister Fanny of yours," said the Peer, as soon as they had quitted the house; "and hang me, if I don't think she's a much cleverer little baggage than any of you seem to imagine. Playful as a kitten, cares for nobody, says whatever comes uppermost, and yet some how or other I like her all the better for it. To me, her giddy nonchalance is a treat, quite *piquant*, after the artificial, cold, and yet designing demureness of half the girls one sees about town. I dare say she is an exceedingly good-hearted and good-tempered little creature."

"'Pon my honour, Mossdale, I don't know what to say to that. You should have heard her rate me when I first returned, about that rideeculous affair of Lucy Haselgrove, I thought the little vixen would have pawsitively torn my eyes out. Never heard anything so prepawstorous, 'pon my honour!"—The Captain proceeded to state, that the rumours which were circulating upon this subject, had occasioned him a good deal of annoyance; that he had been lectured both by Mr. Frampton and Lady

Susan ; and that, as he attributed the publicity of the affair to the impertinent interference and ungentlemanlike comments of one Henry Melcomb, a young Yankee, who had recently come to the neighbourhood, he should take an early opportunity of calling him to account for meddling in matters that did not belong to him. Lord Mossdale, who had no higher morality than generally falls to the lot of young men of fashion, ridiculed the idea of his friend's being annoyed at any gossiping that might be occasioned by such a trumpery affair ; but his Lordship had a foolish prejudice against the Americans in general, and as he really felt indignant that a youthful Yankee should presume to condemn the recreations of an English gentleman, he urged the Captain to enjoin his future silence, or to threaten the babbling fellow with the infliction of the horsewhip. His companion, whose previous ill-will towards Henry was aggravated by these irritating comments, expressed his determination not to pass over the injurious epithets which had been coupled with his name, but to demand a public apology from the offender, or a retraction of his assertions.

Thus conversing, they proceeded towards the preserve, which they had nearly reached, when the Captain exclaimed, "Uncawmonly odd, quite rideeculous, 'pon my honour! Here comes the very fellow! the saucy Yankey that we were talking of. This is parteecularly lucky, —save me the trouble of calling upon him, which is a thing I abawminate. Now you shall see, my dear Mossdale, how I will make the young backbiting rascal eat his own words.—Mr. Melcomb, I believe."

"That is my name," said Henry, who was bending his way to the Manor-house when he encountered the sportsmen.

"I understand, Sir," continued the Captain, forgetting his affected drawl in the excitement of his feelings, "that not content with interfering in the affair of Lucy Haselgrove, the motives for which I can pretty well understand, you have presumed to tattle about my conduct in the business, and have taken very unwarrantable liberties with my name."

"I am no tattler," replied Henry, calmly; "nor have I said a word more upon the subject than I thought necessary for the vindication of

Lucy's character. If I am talking to Captain Frampton, I beg to assure you, that I have taken no liberties with your name that were unwarrantable, since I have not uttered a syllable concerning you that was not strictly true."

"And pray, Sir, may I ask the exact import of the truths that you have thought proper to couple with my name."

"I cannot recollect the precise phrases I may have used, but their substance amounts to this—that the decoyer of Lucy from her home, under the pretext of marriage, but with the real object of seducing her, was an unprincipled liar."

"Damnation, Sir! have you the insolence to apply these terms to me, and before my face, too?"

"As I confess that I have applied them to you behind your back, I think it but right to repeat them before your face."

"Very well, Sir, very well. I presume you will give me satisfaction for this insulting language."

"I really know not what satisfaction I can afford you, farther than by assuring you, that

I would not have employed such terms, unless I conscientiously believed every word to be true. I would not wantonly offend any man, however he may merit my contempt; but there is no man whom I would not rather offend than violate truth."

"Enough, Sir, quite enough; you shall hear from me."

"I had much rather not, for there can be little pleasure in communicating with a person of your character, and as I find still less in your conversation, you must allow me to wish you a good morning." So saying, Henry made a slight inclination of his head, walked slowly away, and taking a book from his pocket, began to read it as he proceeded.

"Curse me, if this Yankee is not the most consummately impudent young dog I ever encountered!" exclaimed Lord Mossdale. "Cool as a cucumber, too, the whole time. Who is he? What is he? Is the fellow fightable?"

"I understand him to be related in some way, though I don't know how, to the late Captain Tenby, of the navy."

“ Who, to my knowledge, was a gentleman, and a man of good family. Then this young chap is decidedly shootable, and you must call him out.”

“ That I shall do instantly, be he who he may,” cried the Captain, piqued and incensed to the very last degree, not only by the pointed insult he had received in the presence of his friend, but by the cool and aggravating audacity with which Henry had comported himself. He was infinitely too much irritated to pursue his intended sport ; instead, therefore, of proceeding to shoot pheasants, he returned immediately to Oakham-hall to concert measures for shooting Henry Melcomb.

CHAPTER II.

Such duty as the subject owes a prince,
Even such a woman oweth to her husband ;
And when she's froward, peevish, sullen, sour,
And not obedient to his honest will,
What is she but a foul contending rebel,
And graceless traitor to her loving lord ?

Taming of the Shrew.

PEOPLE are generally irritated at any disparaging terms that may be applied to them in exact proportion to their truth, a circumstance which will explain the rage of Captain Framp-ton, notwithstanding the general indolence and apathy of his character. On his arrival at Oak-ham-hall, he sat down, and wrote a challenge in due form, of which Lord Mossdale, who was scarcely less incensed than his friend at the cool

impudence, as he termed it, of the Yankee, volunteered to be the bearer, in order that he might personally assist in making such preliminary arrangements as might be required. Henry, not having found Miss Welbeck at home, had returned to Grotto-house, when his Lordship having requested a private interview, placed the letter in his hand, with no other previous observation than that it came from Captain Frampton. Henry, after having perused it, inquired whether his Lordship would have the goodness to take back the answer, which he would write immediately in his own room ; observing, that if he were a geologist, he would not lack amusement for a few minutes, as there were abundant specimens of minerals and fossils dispersed about the parlour. His Lordship bowed coldly, for although the manner in which he had been addressed was perfectly courteous, he thought it rather cavalier treatment that a man of his station should be left kicking his heels in a strange house, and be requested by a Yankee to become his letter-carrier. Henry, however, who, though he meant not to give the least unnecessary offence, respected nothing but moral rank, and honoured no

distinctions so much as those of virtue, left him without farther apology to his meditations or his geological studies, and proceeding to his own room, wrote an answer to the Captain's epistle, which he put into his Lordship's hand.

"I presume," said the Peer, as he took the letter, "that you refuse to retract or to apologize for the injurious terms you have applied to my friend."

"If by the word injurious you mean calumnious or untrue, I deny that I have employed any such terms. It is of his conduct that he ought to be ashamed, not of the merited censure that I applied to it. I have said nothing that was not strictly true; and for the truth, a brave man will never apologize, while a conscientious one will never retract it."

"I did not come here, Sir, to chop logic. I understand nothing of that sort of proceeding."

"I can very easily believe it, my Lord."

"Then, Sir, am I to take it for granted that you have in this letter entered into such full explanations of time and place, as will preclude

the necessity of any farther preliminary meeting?"

"I have been so very explicit," replied Henry, "that your Lordship cannot possibly have occasion to revisit Grotto-house, or seek any fresh interviews with me."

"It is well, Sir, it is well: I admire your spirit; I like these affairs to be settled at once; to be conducted in a prompt and business-like manner, for fear of accidents. I wish you a good morning."

"It is no longer morning, my Lord; I wish you a good afternoon."

"What a pragmatical quiz it is!" muttered Lord Mossdale to himself, as he quitted the house; "Really the Yankee's as precise and cool as if he were giving a lesson in grammar, instead of making arrangements for a duel. I am glad, however, that he has come to book so readily, and means to go out like a man. We shall see how he stands fire. I have known many a fellow, as bold as a lion beforehand, who cried peccavi when it came to measuring the ground, and handling the Mantons; and I shall not

therefore be surprised if this crowing cock prove a dunghill at last ; we may see him yet eat his own words, and make an apology. Faith ! it will be his wisest course, for Framp-ton's a good shot ; and though it is difficult to pique him, owing to his confounded indolence, he doesn't like trifling when once he comes to the scratch."

Like most will-pampered men who have jaded their senses by over-indulgence, Lord Mossdale was liable to fits of listlessness and satiety, which made excitement of any sort a pleasurable sensation. This desiderated stimulus was furnished by the prospect of a duel, in which, if he had been a principal instead of a second, he would still have found a source of gratification. He entered, therefore, with ardour into the arrangements of the expected meeting, the whole of which he had planned in his own mind on his way back to Oakham-hall. " 'The Yankee shows fight,' " said his Lordship, putting Henry's letter into his friend's hand ; " he will neither retract nor apologise, so you must get your Mortimers or Mantons. If you're unprovided, I can lend

you mine. I never travel without them, for there's no saying what may happen. Can't you make out his pothooks and hangers? What a confounded long time you are spelling his epistle!"

"Oh! the fellow writes as laigibly as a lawyer's clerk; but its a long-winded concern. Can't exactly say whether it's an essay or a sermon; but it reads uncawmonly like a printed book. Not quite intailligible, but I rather suspect the cowardly rascal shows the white feather, and declines the honour of standing fire. Altogether the most redeeculous thing I ever met in the whole course of my life. Do read it for me, for I can't altogether understand it; can't now, 'pon my honour!"

"If two heads are better than one," said Lord Mossdale, "four ears must be better than two, so listen!" and, taking the letter, he read as follows:

" ' SIR,

" ' I have received your very silly letter, the style of which is quite worthy of the matter, inasmuch, as it contains two errors of grammatical

construction, and one fault of orthography, or, at least, a Latinism, by the omission of the letter *u* in the word honour, a practice unsanctioned by any standard writer. For having applied words to you, of which you do not, and cannot, deny the truth, you send me a challenge, which I have not the smallest hesitation in declaring that I dare not accept, because I dare not violate the laws of God and man.

“ ‘Duelling is a relic of barbarism, which fools, bullies, and blackguards, seek to maintain, because it affords them, as they ridiculously imagine, an easy method of proving that they are gentlemen; but it is a practice to which men of sense, virtue, and religion, who alone are the real gentlemen, will resolutely oppose themselves; not because they are deficient in personal courage, the most common of all qualities—but because they possess that higher moral intrepidity, which enables them to despise and defy public opinion, when its voice cannot be obeyed without the commission of a wanton and flagrant crime.

“ ‘But even were I not deterred from accepting your challenge by paramount considerations

of duty, I should still decline it, from the glaring futility and inconsequence of the proceeding. If you were to shoot me, you would not the less be what I have termed you, though you would be a murderer in addition. Were I to shoot you, it would bring an indelible stain upon my own name, without in any degree clearing yours. If neither of us shoot the other, we shall both of us be just where we are now, so that we had much better spare ourselves all the trouble and annoyance of going out.

“ ‘ You see, therefore, that there is not any possible alternative, in which my fighting you could conduce to a rational or satisfactory result, even were I released from those divine and human ordinances, which prohibit me from seeking the life of a fellow-creature, or wantonly throwing away my own. This determination being grounded upon immutable principles, cannot, under any circumstances, be either retracted or modified. It is the inflexible resolve of

“ ‘ HENRY MELCOMB.

“ ‘ Grotto-house, Wednesday afternoon.’ ”

As soon as Lord Mossdale had recovered from the fit of laughter into which he burst as he concluded reading the letter, he exclaimed, "Curse me if ever I was so bit before ! fairly taken in,—a dead hoax, I confess, for I never doubted that the Yankee meant to turn out. However, since his only mode of fighting is to fight shy, you must post him as a coward and a blackguard, cane him¹ the first time you meet him, and so dismiss the young grammarian to chop logic at his leisure."

"This determination is the inflexible resolve of——Arthur Frampton," said the Captain, parodying the conclusion of Henry's letter, as he held it up contemptuously with his finger and thumb. "But what does the Jackanapes mean by my two errors of construction? Pawsitively it's a monstous lie !"

"Nay, it's likely enough to be true ; and in return for your two mistakes, he has offered you two proofs that he is himself a good grammarian, for he has lately taught Lucy Haselgrove and young Nettletop to conjugate ; and we see by this letter that he knows perfectly well how to decline the word—duel."

“He he!—vairy good!—capital! excellent! You’re in high force this morning; uncawmonly droll—conjugate—decline—quite redeeculous, ’pon my honour!”

“I hope you mean your honour with the letter u, for otherwise it is no oath, but a latinism.”

“I shall take it as a parteecular favour, Mossdale, if you won’t make me laugh, for I’ve cracked my lip, and it hurts me uncawmonly, ’pon my honour! besides, it looks so monsous vulgar.”

“Never mind; you must open your mouth wider in half an hour, for dinner will be ready by that time. Come, shall we go and dress? There is no time to lose.” The friends withdrew to their toilette, and when in the evening they were left alone with their wine, the letter was again produced and reperused, to the accompaniment of many a fresh sneer and much contemptuous bantering.

Henry, in the meanwhile, who was remarkable for his general equanimity and self-possession, whose happiness, indeed, the result of good health and a good conscience, had hitherto suffered little or no interruption, was in a more

painful state of mind than he thought he could have ever experienced, without having incurred it by any misconduct of his own. The day when he received the challenge was destined to be an eventful one ; his principles were to be assailed from quarters diametrically opposed to each other ; his sense of duty was to be put to the test by love as well as by injured pride and hatred : he had firmly resisted the temptation to sin, by declining the challenge of a man ; he had now to conquer a far more trying temptation, in withstanding the seductions of a handsome, alluring, and enamoured woman. Judging of others by herself, Mrs. Penguin had never entertained a moment's doubt that Emily Welbeck's assignation in the forest was a meeting with some low lover for criminal purposes ; and she had not, therefore, attempted to dissuade Henry from visiting the Manor-house, in the malicious hope that all intercourse would be broken off by his discovering Emily's inability to exculpate herself. From her observation of his character, however, she began subsequently to think that he might be easily hoodwinked and deluded by the solemn protestations

of innocence, and lofty sentiments of virtue, which she believed Emily to be quite capable of feigning for the purpose of concealing her misconduct, and averting his suspicions. The imposition she had herself practised upon Penguin, by hiding from him her own early lapse from virtue, and persuading him that she had never been attached to any one but himself, impressed her with the notion that Henry might be similarly gulled, and made her regret that she had not more earnestly dissuaded him from seeking the interview, and demanding the explanations that he had pledged himself to require. These fears and misgivings had haunted her during the whole time of his visit to the Manor-house, the object of which he had stated to her with his usual frankness. She had been sitting for some time upon the tenter-hooks of expectation, awaiting his return, and was proportionably mortified when, upon his arrival at the house, he was engaged immediately, and for some time, with Lord Mossdale.

No sooner was he left alone, than Mrs. Penguin, who had purposely sent her husband out of the way, hurried into the parlour where he

was sitting. She had attired herself in the most alluring manner possible, making such a display of her charms, as she flattered herself would prove utterly irresistible, especially when she recollected the youth of her intended victim. It was not without considerable agitation that she inquired the result of the meeting with Emily, but becoming instantly more composed, when she found that no interview had taken place, she began, in the most urgent terms that she could command, to persuade him to rest satisfied with the incontrovertible evidence of his own eyes, and never more to think of a girl who could carry on an intrigue with a low ruffian, and yet hypocritically affect all the demureness of modesty. Unpersuaded by her arguments, and unbent by her earnest entreaties, Henry reiterated his intention of demanding an early explanation, and expressed a renewed conviction that Emily would be able to exculpate herself. At this fresh proof of his credulous gullibility, for such it appeared to her, Mrs. Penguin saw clearly that she would soon have an established and most formidable rival at the Manor-house, unless she could immedi-

ately divert Henry's thoughts and affections into another channel, and entangle him in her own snares. The hints of her attachment, which she had repeatedly thrown out, had not been taken; her lures had hitherto failed to inveigle him; he was either blind or timid, and it was absolutely necessary to apprise him of his good fortune by advances too unequivocal to be mistaken. This was the only feasible method of detaching him from Emily, and the present appeared to her to be the proper moment for carrying it into execution. Abandoning herself, therefore, to her guilty passion, the unprincipled woman made a full, unblushing avowal of her attachment, a confession to which, she said, she was impelled by the ungovernable vehemence of her love, expressing a confident hope that he would not now hesitate in his choice, between a pale-faced, artful girl, carrying on a love affair with an unknown vagabond, and one who, whatever might be her personal allurements—and she trusted they were rather more attractive than those of Miss Welbeck—could at all events offer him the sole and undivided affections of her whole heart.

Transfixed with sorrow and surprise at a declaration so plain and profligate, Henry could not help hearing it to a conclusion ; but he had no sooner recovered from his amazement, than he shook off the seductive creature, who had taken possession of his hand, and starting aside, as if he had seen a basilisk in his path, exclaimed with a tone and look of poignant mental anguish, rather than of anger, “ Unhappy woman ! what have you said, what have you done ? Would to heaven that you had never uttered these guilty sentiments ! Would to heaven that I had never heard them ! Oh, my dear, dear Mrs. Penguin !—but only dear to me so long as you are the chaste and virtuous wife of my friend—what infatuation has blinded you, what demon has been goading you on to the brink of a precipice, whence, by one single false step, you may be irredeemably plunged into guilt, misery, and wretchedness, both here and hereafter ? By all that you value upon earth, by all your hopes of heaven, I implore, I entreat, I supplicate you to cast out the devil that possesses you, to be again yourself, to recover the purity of your mind, to discard for ever the licentious

and abominable thoughts which—nay ! you shall not speak, you shall not commit yourself any farther, I have heard too much already—you must, you shall now listen to me ! Gracious God ! have you considered what it is to be an adulteress, that it adds perjury to all its other enormities ? Did you not solemnly vow at the altar to be faithful to your husband, and can the Deity be insulted, can all human law be outraged, without entailing ultimate misery and destruction upon so deep and daring a transgressor ? Impossible ! If adultery were not inevitably pursued by the gnawings of remorse from within, and the hootings of contempt from without, there would be no security left upon earth for happiness, virtue, or religion. And me too ! Have you considered the base treachery, the black ingratitude of which I should be guilty, were I to sting the heart, and poison for ever the happiness of the benefactor who is so generously affording me the enjoyment of his hospitality, and the protection of his roof ? I shudder at the very thought. Oh, no, no, no, you have not, you cannot have considered any of these things. You are labouring

under a momentary delusion, an alienation of mind which will quickly pass away, and against the return of which you must earnestly and devoutly supplicate heaven in your prayers. But it is safer to avoid temptation, than to trust to the resolutions of human infirmity. You are handsome, very handsome; I am subject to all the frailties of youth; an unguarded moment, in spite of all our good intentions, might plunge us both into guilt and all its train of miseries. I dare not expose myself to such a perilous trial, and I shall therefore quit your house to-night."

During this speech, Mrs. Penguin's countenance, agitated by contending emotions, had gradually become inflamed and reddened, not by the suffusions of penitence and shame, but by the angry paroxysms of a violent and vicious mind. Her eyes flashed, her bosom heaved, her veins swelled and darkened, her nostrils were dilated, and though, in order to restrain her ebullient feelings, she bit her lip till the marks of her teeth remained deeply indented upon it, she could hardly prevent her rage and

disappointment from bursting out in a torrent of passionate invective. Henry, however, perceiving the struggle of her emotions, and determined not to be interrupted in his painful, though necessary remonstrance, had overawed her by the calm but superior energies of virtue, and had thus compelled her to hear him out. The earnestness, the inflexible decision of his looks and tones, as well as the dignified tenor of his sentiments, all convincing her that he would be immovable, that she had thrown away her blandishments, that she had nothing whatever to hope, in one moment her whole bad heart became drenched in bitterness, and her licentious passion, let it not be dignified with the noble name of love, was converted into a deadly hatred.

The desire of revenge, however, which instantly sprung up in her bosom, prompted her to assume a forced composure, though she still spoke pantingly, and in an unnatural voice, as she exclaimed, "You are right, Sir, quite right, perfectly right. These are not my real sentiments—nothing but a temporary—in short, a mere frolic, nothing more, just to try you.

But, at all events, Sir, I hope you are at least man enough not to disclose what has passed between us."

"I promise you never to divulge it to any breathing being."

"Will you swear to keep it secret?"

"I never swear, but I have said it, and I am not in the habit of swerving from my word, least of all should I do so in so delicate an affair as this."

"Enough, Sir, enough: that is all I have now to require of you," said Mrs. Penguin, tossing out of the room, violently shutting the door after her, and muttering between her clenched teeth as she retired, "Poor, canting, puritanical milksop! does the mean, paltry, chicken-hearted fellow think that I want to hear a sermon from him? Let him look to it! let him look to it! I'll not be thus insulted for nothing. I'll have my revenge, or my name is not Laura Penguin!"

Henry had said that he would immediately quit Grotto-house, but a moment's consideration showed him that so sudden a departure

would demand explanations, both with Mrs. Tenby and Penguin, which must be managed with great delicacy, lest they should excite suspicions, which on all accounts he was most anxious not to awaken. In this dilemma he remained for some time, taking counsel of his own thoughts as to his most prudent course of action. The more he reflected on the predicament in which he was placed, the more urgently did he feel the necessity of withdrawing himself from the fascinations with which he might be assailed; while his solicitude upon Mrs. Penguin's account, his earnest wish to preserve her name from imputation, and to confirm her in the good resolutions which he flattered himself he had excited in her bosom, were still more intense than the considerations which had reference to his own honour and safety. Nothing could induce him to assign a false motive for his abrupt departure, for he utterly abhorred a lie; but he might truly state that a difference had unexpectedly arisen between Mrs. Penguin and himself, and that his feelings of independence would not

allow him to remain beneath a roof where there was reason to believe that he was no longer considered a welcome guest. These appeared to be the most feasible motives he could assign, and having proceeded to Mrs. Tenby's apartment, he lost no time in stating them, avowing his intention of immediately quitting the house, and taking up his abode for the present at the George-inn, at Thaxted; but adding, that he saw no reason why she should accompany him, if she preferred remaining in her present quarters.

“ Rattlesnakes and ringums!” exclaimed Mrs. Tenby, in utter amazement; “ you can't be serious; you're only poking fun at me. What! throw yourself out of peck and perch, where you may be saving nine dollars out of every ten that come in, because you and she have had a few words! Well, this beats all natur! I wouldn't budge from free quarters like these; no, not if she had poked out one of my eyes in a gouging match; if I would, I'm up a tree, that's all!”

“ Your conduct, Madam, need not be in-

fluenced by mine, though I would caution you against wearing out your welcome: but the motives by which I am governed are imperative. I am quite serious, my resolution is formed, I shall quit the house to-night."

"Why then, I reckon, you're the biggest gump a-going! A pretty considerable handsome fool you'll be making of yourself if you do. Henry, Henry! now don't be so tejus! Here's a fuss and a coil about a few loud words from a woman's tongue! Lord! boy, you mustn't be so nice, but give a scratch for a claw, or you'll never scramble through the world. 'Handle your tools without mittens,' as poor Richard says, and remember 'that the cat in gloves catches no mice.'"

"My reasons for going are conclusive to my own mind. Every thing may be lost, while nothing can be gained by my remaining beneath this roof."

"Hear to him! hear to him! 'Tatoes and codfish! I haven't patience to listen to you. Nothing to be gained! How do you know that? Now, I rather reckon, that much may be gained; for if Penguin were to break his

neck over one of the cliffs he's always grubbing at, and that's pretty likely, I guess, oughtn't his own brother's widow to look for pickings, and mayn't you come in for handsome snacks? He has got no children, and never will have, tell me on't if he does! Why shouldn't he adopt you, and leave you a slice of fortun? Didn't Tenby do so? Guess he did, indeed! Henry, Henry! don't you be so 'tarnal huffey as to quarrel with your bread-and-butter; but hold a candle to the devil, ask her pardon, and make it up with her; she's neither a Mohawk nor a Nigger; one word may settle it all, and remember, that 'for want of a nail the shoe was lost; for want of a shoe the horse was lost; and for want of a horse the rider was lost, being overtaken and slain by the enemy,' as poor Richard says."

"Your advice comes too late; our disagreement is of a nature that cannot be reconciled, consistently with what I feel to be due both to Mrs. Penguin and myself."

"Joes to coppers I 'll make it all up in five minutes. Harkee, boy, I haven't got eyes for nothing, though you may; she likes you a

pretty clever bit more than she does her husband, in spite of all her palavering and bamboozledums. Ay, it's as true as ever I was born in Virginny. You have only to beckon with your finger, I reckon, and she'll come to you in any way you like, either as soople as a snake, or as sry as a cat : so once more I say, don't be afraid to stoop when there's no other way of reaching your dish. 'When the well's dry, you'll know the worth of water.' Remember 'that poor pride soon gets a fall, for it's hard for an empty bag to stand upright ;' and above all, recollect, that 'if you will not hear Reason, she will surely rap your knuckles,' as poor Richard says."

Henry was about to renew the expression of his regret that he could not comply with her wishes, his resolution to depart being inflexible, when the door was suddenly thrown open, and Penguin burst into the room, trembling and pale with agitation, and for a few seconds utterly unable to speak from the vehemence of his emotions. "Soh, Sir!" he at length exclaimed, bending his angry eyes upon Henry, and holding up his clenched fist, though he

still kept at a respectful distance, "A pretty viper, I find, I have been nourishing in my bosom! Oh, you young miscreant! you audacious profligate! you scandalous hypocrite! Is this your gratitude for all the kindness I have shown you, to creep into my house, like a falsehearted, deceitful thief, that you might rob me of my most precious treasure? 'Gad, sirrah! if I were twenty years younger, and a fighting man—which, thank God! I never was—I would break every bone in your skin, and then kick you down-stairs. As it is, I shall not demean myself to a scuffle with you; but out of this house you shall instantly troop, bag and baggage, and you may think yourself lucky to get off so easily."

"The old one! here 's a 'tarnal fuze and flustration!" exclaimed Mrs. Tenby. "What 's in the wind now? what 's my boy done? He aint a Mohawk, I opinion, that you 're to talk of peppering his dish in this way. Love ye, man! 'twould take ten such as you to do it!"

"Done, Madam! what has he done? That for which he ought to be horsewhipped all through the county, from Marshwood to Christ-

church. He has attempted to seduce my wife ! that admirable woman, that exemplary creature ; who, after having in vain endeavoured to recall him to a sense of duty, has just been compelled to reveal to me the whole of his villany, and has insisted that he should be instantly expelled from the house."

"I declare to you, most solemnly," said Henry, "that I am utterly incapable of the atrocity imputed to me. Mrs. Penguin must be labouring under a grievous misapprehension. Not for worlds would I have deserved this charge. No one can explain so well as Mrs. Penguin how the mistake has originated, to her I refer you ; for myself, I will say no more, but I repeat that I am innocent."

"Mistake ! you young prevaricator ! What mistake could there be in an affair of this sort, except that you mistook the woman you had to deal with ? It was wrong, perhaps, of me to expose you to such a temptation ; but what a fine developement of character has it afforded me ! How has it unmasked the treachery of the pretended friend ! How has it confirmed the virtue of the fond and truly attached wife !"

“My lips are sealed,” said Henry; “I have said all that I can. I was already preparing to quit your house, and I shall do so immediately. I forgive you all your injurious terms, because they proceed from error; and I sincerely hope that the time may soon arrive when you will be convinced that I have done nothing to forfeit your friendship.”

“I smell a rat, I smell a rat!” shouted Mrs. Tenby; who in her indignation at the charge brought against Henry, and her perfect conviction of its falsehood, suddenly forgot all the prudential and conciliatory maxims she had so recently been inculcating. “If I haven’t fathomed the whole plot, I’m up a tree, that’s all! My brave boy would never tell a lie, no, not if he had a tomahawk at his throat, and was going to be scalped by the Injuns. What! because I sit half the day up in my own room, can’t I see how the cat jumps? Guess I can see more of my nose with one eye shut, than I can when both are open; and if there has been any attempt at seduction in this affair, I conceit that it comes from the other side of the hedge. —Leave me be, Henry, I say; I’ll speak my

mind right slick, and for your own sake you hadn't ought to stop me."

"Let me beg you, Madam, to say 'ought not,' instead of 'hadn't ought.'"

"Well, this beats all natur! To think of your schooling me, and teaching your grannum to suck eggs, at the very moment she's standing up in your defence! Guess you'll never be fit for any thing but an usher at a grammar-school. —Lookee, Mr. Penguin! it's a wise child that knows its own father, and it's a wiser man that knows his own wife. Joes to coppers this is a petticoat plot; and if there's been any wolf in sheep's clothing in this house, it's a she-wolf, I'll swear!"

"I beseech you to leave me without defence, rather than to throw imputations upon any one," said Henry.

"Torment us all! that again's spoken for all the world just like a gump; 'twouldn't be you if 'twan't. But I won't be neither gagged nor gulled. So, brother Penguin, I tell you to your face, that if there's been any wild bird hereabouts, I'll take my oath it's a hen; and what's more, that she comes out of your own

nest ; and what 's more still, that her name begins with a P. ; and now, if you can't see what I mean, you're a blind buzzard. So, there ! that 's into you, I rather reckon !"

" Hold your scandalous tongue !" cried Penguin, in fresh wrath ; " I won't listen to your abominable slanders ! Would you dare insinuate any thing against that admirable woman, the paragon of her sex ? Madam ! madam ! if these are your Yankee principles, you had better accompany your hopeful son, for my house shall not afford you another night's shelter !"

" Yankee principles !" cried Mrs. Tenby, whose American blood was now fairly up, and who began in consequence to pour forth a torrent of Virginian eloquence which drowned all Henry's expostulations, and presently drove Penguin from the room. " Come, boy, let 's pack up our duds and begone !" she exclaimed, as soon as the object of her vituperation had escaped, " though it 's a 'tarnal shame to send us trampoozing about the country at this time of day !"

Henry willingly assisting her in the operation, they quickly got ready their luggage ;

and having left word with the servants whither it was to be forwarded, they quitted Grotto-house, without seeking any fresh interview, either with Mr. or Mrs. Penguin, and in due time reached the George at Thaxted, where it was their intention to remain until they should decide upon their future plans.

In the recent rare and spirited assertion of her independence, Mrs. Tenby, taken in the first instance by surprise, had been supported by feelings of pride, anger, and nationality; but during the walk to Thaxted, her passion had gradually subsided, and by the time they had reached the inn, her natural sordidness of character had pretty well recovered its ascendancy. Regret at having lost the immediate advantages of "peck and perch," as well as at the demolition of all her future hopes from Penguin's testamentary dispositions, soured her temper, and prompted her to vent her ill-humour upon Henry, whom she accused as the unlucky cause of all these manifold privations and disappointments. Reminding him, that they were no longer in the free and comfortable quarters of Grotto-house, but at an inn, where

they must pay through the nose for every thing, she besought him to be careful of what he ordered, quoting many a Poor Richard maxim upon the duties of economy, and losing no opportunity of endeavouring to wound his feelings, already sufficiently lacerated, by peevish allusions to his unluckiness, his indiscretion, and his gullibility. To escape from this petty persecution, Henry was glad to retire to his bed, where, however, his anxiety of mind would not for some time allow him to sleep. Mrs. Penguin's most extraordinary and unexpected charge against him, and the assent that would probably be yielded to it by the world, as readily as it had found credence with Penguin, prepared him for encountering general obloquy and reproach ; a visitation which, even when unmerited, it was difficult to bear, and to which Henry was the more keenly sensitive, because he had been not less scrupulous in the observance, than honourably solicitous to obtain the reputation of moral rectitude. Perhaps he was still more hurt on Mrs. Penguin's account than on his own. Of so celestial a quality did he

consider the native purity of the female mind, that every one who lapsed from the heaven of her virtue, he contemplated as an addition to the number of the fallen angels; and in the case upon which his thoughts were dwelling, the malignant falsehood, and the dark revenge to which she had had recourse, proved to him how rapid and deplorable is the fall when the paths of purity are once deserted, a humiliating reflection which he could not make without feeling as if his own moral dignity had been lowered. Mrs. Penguin, indeed, was but an exception; she could not shake his general confidence in the sex; but his mind was saddened and depressed, and in this temporary access of morbid feeling, he could not revert to Emily Welbeck, and to her mysterious assignation in the Forest, without misgivings and sinkings of the heart, to which, at any other moment, he would not have been subjected. Agitated by various conjectures and resolves, he remained for a long time awake; but the consoling reflection, that whatever might happen he was innocent; that he had, during the course of

that most anxious day, meritoriously resisted two temptations of the most opposite character ; and that a causeless despondency was ingratitude to Heaven, at length enabled him to tranquillize his mind, and to forget himself in sleep.

CHAPTER III.

If thou lovest her,
Or entertainest a hope to blast my wishes,
Thou art a traitor, Arcite, and a fellow
False as thy title to her : friendship, blood,
And all the ties between us I disclaim,
If thou once think upon her.

THE TWO NOBLE KINSMEN.

A FEW hours repose, and a few minutes morning reflection, restored to Henry that firm tone of moral courage which was the characteristic of his mind. If it could not be altogether affirmed that his "bosom's lord sate lightly on its throne," it might be said with truth that his temporary depression had vanished, and that, in the consciousness of his soul being free from stain, he was prepared to endure with fortitude whatever annoyances or

vexations might be entailed upon him by the malignant fabrications of Mrs. Penguin. Well aware that injurious rumours are commonly aggravated by each fresh reporter, and anxious to anticipate Emily's knowledge of the recent occurrences at Grotto-house, he resolved to make another and an immediate attempt at gaining an interview with her, to which he was impelled not less by the desire of exculpating himself before-hand, than by his anxiety to obtain, if possible, some explanation of the meeting, or rather the assignation in the Forest. This he considered to be now quite as necessary upon her account as his own, since Mrs. Penguin, who had been equally a spectator of the transaction, and who, under present circumstances, was not likely to put any restraints upon her tongue, might circulate calumnies in the neighbourhood calculated to wound most deeply the feelings of so sensitive a being as Emily, even if they did not ruin her reputation.

Influenced by these considerations, he walked over, at an early hour in the morning, to the Manor-house, revolving in his mind the most delicate way of stating the object of his visit.

On his entering the great hall, the end of which was fitted up like a small court of law, he beheld Welbeck, sitting as a magistrate in an elevated arm-chair, surrounded by a posse of gamekeepers and others, whose depositions he was taking against a gang of poachers, the latter being easily recognized by their chop-fallen looks and pinioned arms, while the table was covered with the game which they had snared on the preceding night. Beckoning Henry to his side, the justice requested him to walk up-stairs to the room over the porch, as he was particularly anxious to have his opinion of an old play which Emy had at length found, after a long search ; adding, that its perusal would afford him amusement during the half-hour that would elapse before he himself should be able to dispatch the business upon which he was then occupied. Henry would have much rather received an invitation to join his young and interesting daughter in the parlour, than to sit in judgment upon an old drama, amid the dusty quartos, and loaded fire-arms, which imparted such a sombre character to Welbeck's own room ; but not wishing his visit to assume

the appearance of being pointedly made to Emily, whom he hoped to encounter before he again quitted the house, he proceeded to the porch-room.

Fortune favoured him beyond his expectations, for on entering the apartment, he beheld Emily standing on a chair, with her back towards the door, replacing one of the ponderous, black-looking old books. She had no sooner recognized him, than she jumped to the ground, a roseate suffusion, and a soft sweet smile lighting up her usually pale and pensive features, and as she advanced towards him, she exclaimed with an animated voice, "Oh, Mr. Melcomb! I was so vexed when I found you had called yesterday, during my absence; and I am so glad I have found the old play-book that was missing! I was determined never to cease hunting for it, for I thought its perusal might afford you pleasure."

There was nothing particular in her words, nothing in her manner, beyond its customary cordiality and benignity; to explain the magical effect of her looks and accents upon Henry would therefore be impossible; but a lover may

understand us when we state, that they carried to his heart an instantaneous, a thrilling, an electrical conviction, of her unalterable truth and stainless purity. Any doubts that might have lurked in the recesses of his bosom would have been chased away at once; but there were none, and his face confessed the implicit trust and delighted exhilaration of his soul, as he exclaimed, "Oh! Miss Welbeck! I cannot tell you how assured and happy I feel at this moment. The first sight of you, and the first sound of your voice, have filled me with pleasant and holy thoughts, and with a stedfast faith. But let me not allude to misgivings, which it was sinful in me to have entertained, even for a moment. I have much to say to you,—much that is of a confidential nature, and of deep moment to both of us; and as I know not how long we may be left without interruption, I must request the favour of your listening to me now."

He reached a chair for Emily, who sate timidly down in it, blushing deeply, her bosom beginning to heave, and her downcast eyes being fixed upon the floor. Henry placed him-

self beside her, and continued, "If I hate any thing upon earth, it is a lie. I claim no merit for my sincerity and truth, since I believe them to be constitutional in me, and I could not knowingly utter a falsehood without doing a violence to my nature. I say not this boastfully, but to induce you, by your knowledge of my character, to yield me your entire belief, when I most solemnly assure you that I am innocent of the atrocious charges which, as I much fear, you will shortly hear coupled with the name of Henry Melcomb."

"With your name!" faltered Emily, her looks still bent upon the ground; "with yours! Can any thing dishonourable be attributed to *you*?"

"Yes, worse than dishonourable; every thing that is base and infamous. You will hear that I have been guilty of an act of ingratitude, the very mention of which makes me shudder—that I have attempted to rob my friend and benefactor of the affections of his wife."

"Impossible! Who has dared to invent so monstrous a calumny?" exclaimed Emily,

throwing up her head, looking at her companion with an expression of indignant surprise, little in accordance with her habitual meekness, and again suddenly casting down her eyes in blushing confusion.

“ Thank you, thank you a thousand times for your generous confidence, for your disbelief of this most cruel aspersion ; and if I cannot explain the circumstances under which I have quitted Mr. Penguin’s roof, I implore you to put a charitable construction upon my silence.”

“ From my knowledge of your sentiments and actions, I will never, never, never believe that you could have even contemplated any thing depraved, still less so detestable a crime as this !”

“ Most fervently, most gratefully do I repeat my thanks for your good opinion, which will support me, however I may be assailed by the shafts of slander. And now, Miss Welbeck, it is my painful duty to apprise you, that you yourself may be exposed to misrepresentations, nay, to the most calumnious surmises and insinuations from a circumstance respecting which my own lips would remain for ever sealed, but of which another was unfortunately an eye-witness

as well as myself. Nothing but my regard for your honour would have urged me to mention the occurrence, but this being my motive, I do not consider any apology necessary for what I am about to state, nor for the perfect frankness with which I shall make the communication."

Emily was silent, but she raised herself up in her chair, her eyes were now fixed upon her companion, and her half-open mouth betokened expectation and surprise. But as Henry proceeded succinctly to relate what himself and Mrs. Penguin had seen, not omitting their surprise at the embraces bestowed upon Emily by the stranger, her distress and agitation became excessive, she trembled violently, the colour rushed to her cheeks, brow, and bosom, again leaving them of an ashy whiteness, she panted audibly, and more than once essayed to speak, but seemed unable to give utterance to her words.

As Henry marked all this with a transfixed attention, Mrs. Penguin's sinister words—"Question her, and if her confusion do not confirm her guilt, my name's not Laura Penguin," recurred involuntarily to his mind; but he

drove away the recollection, just as he would shut his eyes upon a hateful apparition, contemplating with the most profound and tender sympathy the countenance of his companion, which remained agitated with the struggle of vehement emotions. Evidently striving to command herself, she more than once attempted to speak, but her efforts proving ineffectual, she at length burst suddenly into a passion of tears, and sobbed with an almost hysterical violence.

“Gracious Heaven!” ejaculated Henry in great agitation and distress. “What have I said? what have I done? Wretch that I am! to have wounded—shall I call for help? shall I fly for succour?”

“No, no, no; not for the world!” sobbed Emily, staying him with her hand. “I shall be better in a moment. I should have died, or gone into a fit, had I not been relieved by these tears. I shall be composed presently; forgive this agitation: don’t quit me, I shall be able to speak to you shortly.” Suffering her tears to flow unrestrained for a brief space, she became comparatively calm, and after having sighed deeply, she exclaimed, “It was too much for

me ; I am naturally timid, my nerves have been shaken by sorrow and perpetual apprehension, and I could not bear to imagine that the world, above all, that you, Sir, should think lightly of me—should suppose me capable of—Indeed ! indeed ! Mr. Melcomb, I am innocent ! Good God ! what a deep humiliation, that I should be called on to make the avowal !” She pressed her lips closely together, the muscles of her mouth were convulsed, and the tears again flowed rapidly down her cheeks.

Penetrated at once with love, compassion, and regret, at this most touching spectacle, Henry bitterly accused himself as the cause of her distress ; assuring her, however, as he tenderly implored her to be comforted, that he required no explanation himself, since he believed her to be pure as angels, but that he had thought it right she should be prepared to repel the malicious constructions and slanders of Mrs. Penguin. “ To me, to my heart,” he passionately exclaimed, “ one single look of that sinless face affords a deeper conviction of your innocence, than all the exculpatory evidence than my senses are fashioned to receive.”

“Thank you! thank you! God bless you!” cried Emily, unconsciously grasping his hand in emotion, and then blushing crimson deep at the fancied impropriety of the action: “What a cruel, what an extraordinary fate is mine!” she continued, speaking rapidly, as if to recover from her own confusion, as well as to withdraw Henry’s attention from the liberty she had inadvertently taken—“Heaven knows, that I had already cares and sorrows enough, without this new and still more agonizing trial. It is horrible to have my name traduced, and perhaps to have my fame destroyed for ever by such a woman as Mrs. Penguin, especially when I know that I would rather die a thousand deaths than commit the crime of which she suspects me; but such is the peculiar hardship of my fate, that I must not, cannot, will not reveal the facts that would triumphantly clear me at once, and cover my slanderers with shame.”

“The reasons for your silence I firmly believe to be not less honourable than imperative,” said Henry. “Perhaps they are only temporary in their nature, but at all events truth and innocence are eternal, and will ultimately

establish themselves against all the contumelies that malice can invent."

"I would fain hope so:—a day will doubtless come, when I shall be able to exculpate myself to you, to all the world, but in the mean time I must submit to my wrongs. How strange a similarity there exists in our respective fates! You are assailed with derogatory charges of which you know yourself to be perfectly guiltless, but which circumstances will not allow you to explain away; so am I. You implore me to believe you innocent, and from my knowledge of your character I put implicit confidence in your protestations. I make the same averment of my untainted purity, and you put your whole trust in my simple assertion. Let the world then malign and slander us as it will, but never let it shake our firm reliance upon each other's integrity."

"Generous, pure, and high-minded Miss Welbeck! I feel honoured by your proposal, and thus do I solemnly ratify our mutual contract."—He took her hand, pressed it respectfully to his lips, and was about to follow up this act of trust and homage by a formal decla-

ration of his love, when Emily, suddenly withdrawing her hand, exclaimed, "Hist! I hear a footstep. Perhaps my father is coming. He must not see that I have been weeping, for I conceal my sorrows from him as much as possible. Your communication, distressing as it has been, is in some degree atoned for by the proof which it has afforded me of your generous confidence in my honour.—Farewell! Farewell!" So saying, she waved her hand, and hurried out of the room.

Left to himself, Henry remained for some time plunged in deep reflection upon the scene that had just past, and the mysterious declaration he had heard. His trust in Emily being now implicit and invulnerable, it must have been some latent feeling of curiosity that led him rather to regret her not having been more explanatory; but, whatever was the source of the sensation, he did feel it, and busied himself in vain conjectures, as he attempted to reconcile perfect innocence with the inexplicable assignation in the Forest. At one moment he regretted that he had lost so favourable an opportunity of declaring his attachment, especially after having ingratiated

himself by his confidence in her integrity ; and in the next he thought that all confession of his love should be postponed until an *eclaircissement* had taken place, and the mystery should be cleared up.

While he was thus occupied, the door was gently opened, and Emily re-appeared, blushing, and looking confused, though her eyes had nearly recovered their brilliancy, and her countenance no longer wore so deep an expression of woe. “ My father is still engaged in the hall,” she said, “ and likely to be detained for some time longer, and I have therefore ventured back to say—— I fear you will be surprised at my vacillation, but I have been reflecting—I have been taking counsel of my own heart, and I find that I could not bear—that I should be miserable were I to leave you in the dark, as to the meeting in the Forest, of which you were a witness. In spite of your reliance upon my truth, in spite even of your own magnanimous heart, some misgiving, some suspicion might steal into your mind, and I could not exist if I thought that you entertained a moment’s doubt of me. I know your strict reverence for

truth, and it is only because the safety, perhaps the life of another is concerned, that I must exact your promise never to reveal what I am now about to divulge to you."

"I do not require this explanation, my dear Miss Welbeck, to satisfy my own mind; but if you think proper to make it voluntarily, I promise that whatever you communicate shall remain a profound secret."

"Enough! enough! you shall know all, and I am the more induced to make this disclosure, because I want a friend and counsellor who may assist me with his advice. It is hard for a poor timid girl like me to be left to struggle unassisted with such dangers, sorrows, and sore perplexities, as I have had to encounter." She opened the door to ascertain that no one was in the passage, or within hearing, shut it again gently, seated herself in the chair by Henry, cast a timorous glance around the room, and then resumed in an almost whispering voice,—
"And now, to come first to that point which will remove from me an imputation to which I cannot even refer without a burning of my cheeks, know that the man with whom I made

the assignation in the forest, is my own, my only brother. Oh! that brother, that degraded, prodigal, and ill-starred, though still beloved brother! what miseries has he already heaped upon himself, and all of us! and what additional sufferings may he still entail upon me, from the slanders to which this luckless meeting may give rise! To understand how critically he is circumstanced, you must hear his melancholy story, which shall be told you in as few words as possible. Educated to be a gentleman, and considered as the undoubted heir of all the wealth which my father is known to have accumulated, poor Godfrey, for that is my brother's name, was early surrounded by parasites and profligates, who, taking advantage of his pliability of mind and natural proneness to dissipation, seduced him into errors and excesses of every description. My father, who doated on him, repeatedly paid his debts, but a fatal passion for gaming rendering it impossible to keep him clear from embarrassments and final ruin, he was abandoned to his evil courses, in the hope that difficulties and sufferings might reclaim him.

Alas! they only plunged him into deeper criminality. Blinded by some inexplicable infatuation of his own passions, or falling a victim to the artifices of others, I know not which, he was decoyed into a marriage with a low, an abandoned, an infamous woman. As he was known to be the only son of a rich man, his loose companions had engaged him in drawing or accepting bills for the purpose of raising money, and in these transactions he became implicated in some irregularity which has been pronounced to be a forgery. This must have been from sheer ignorance, for with all his faults, I believe him incapable of such a crime as this, and so indeed he himself most solemnly avers."

"Unfortunate young man!" ejaculated Henry; "what anxiety and distress must he have occasioned to his family! How did your father bear this accumulation of disgrace?"

"You must have seen enough of his temper to know, that whether in his likes or dislikes, he is violent almost to a morbid excess; but you do not know the fierce and ungovernable whirlwinds of passion to which he is some-

times subjected. At this wretched consumption of all Godfrey's follies and misdeeds, at the prospect of the ignominy in which his whole family might be involved, my father, whose affections had been already in a considerable degree estranged, fell upon his knees, solemnly cursed his son, and threatened me with the same awful malediction if I ever mentioned his name. Sometimes, though very rarely, he will himself speak of him as 'the wretch whom I have cursed;' but he allows nobody else to allude to him, and it is needless to add that he has disinherited him for ever."

"And is this bitter and most aggravating disappointment of all his hopes the cause of that unhappy state of mind with which Mr. Welbeck is afflicted?"

"It is *one* of the causes," replied Emily; and then quickly reverting to the story of her unfortunate brother, she continued—"Poor Godfrey soon discovered the real character of the wife who had been imposed upon him as a respectable woman, and whose dissolute habits and character made an incalculable addition to his miseries. To escape from the horrors and

humiliation of such a home, from the bailiffs who were pursuing him for his wife's debts as well as his own, and from threatened arrest upon a criminal charge, my wretched brother fled secretly from London, the scene of all his follies, and travelling by night into this neighbourhood, concealed himself in the most sequestered recesses of the New Forest. Well knowing that the sight of him, in my father's irritated state of mind, might have goaded him to madness, Godfrey never approached the Manor-house; but he contrived to acquaint me with his situation; he made me the medium of communication with his law-agent in London; he occasionally appointed, in the secluded parts of the Forest, places of meeting where we might see and consult with each other; and to these assignations he always came in the vulgar disguise which he habitually wears for his better security against discovery. - A long and painful illness had prevented his seeing me for some time previous to that rencontre of which you were a witness, and it was in the exhilaration of restored health, and of an ever-affectionate, though misguided heart, that he bestowed upon

me those embraces which naturally excited so much surprise in your mind, and such ungenerous and unfeminine suspicions in that of Mrs. Penguin."

"I was sure, quite confident, my dear Miss Welbeck, that whenever you thought proper to explain the motives of your conduct, they would redound to your honour, and most fully have my expectations been realized."

"You see now," resumed Emily, "why I could not make a similar exposition to the world. A whisper of this nature might occasion the arrest of my brother; and God knows what consequences might follow his imprisonment! I should have added, that from the time of our childhood we have ever been sincerely attached to one another; and that all his subsequent misconduct, much as I deplore it, has not alienated him from my heart; for though he sadly wants firmness of character, and was always of a dissipated turn, he is by no means naturally vicious. I am in correspondence with his law agent, whom I have supplied with funds for investigating the criminal charge in which Godfrey is implicated, and if we can clear him from

this, I am not altogether without hope that, in some lucky moment, I may effect his reconciliation with my father.—Mr. Melcomb, are you satisfied? Is there any other point that you wish me to elucidate? If there be, state it fearlessly and frankly, and I promise you an instant and an honest answer.”

“Satisfied, Miss Welbeck! I am more than satisfied. I am filled with a still deeper admiration and reverence for your character than I before entertained, exalted as was my estimate of your virtues.”

“Nay, Sir, I did not ask for a compliment, but rather for a charge, or at least for an interrogatory, that I might complete my defence. If all your doubts are cleared up, I have only to thank you for listening so patiently to my exculpation; and as I have kept you long enough from the book I found for you, I will not now make a farther trespass upon your time.”

“Trespass! it is one which you will always delight me by repeating. You must not go, indeed you must not, until you have heard me. There is still a most important point upon

which I would entreat for explanation, one in which my happiness is deeply concerned. You have said that you wish for a counsellor to assist you in the most arduous and critical duties you have to perform for your poor brother, and I would fain give myself a better title to that office than can be possessed by a mere acquaintance, however you may respect his honour and his judgment. According to the usages of the world, I am aware that I am about to commit a great act of presumption ; but I believe that there are many of these practices of which you, as well as myself, cannot acknowledge the rationality."

Emily coloured deeply, and began to tremble.

" You have desired me, Miss Welbeck, to be frank and fearless, which I should have been without this kind permission, both because it is my nature to be so at all times, and because, where our happiness is concerned, I think all false delicacy and reserve should give way to a manly, straightforward sincerity. In one word, then, I love you—love you with the first ardent homage of a pure uncontaminated heart, and if I may be permitted—"

“ Oh no, indeed, indeed, Mr. Melcomb,” interposed Emily, in increased agitation, “ nothing of this sort can be permitted. Think not of it again, speak of it no more, I beseech you. It is utterly, utterly hopeless ; and to entertain such a wild project will but irritate my father, and add to the already overflowing measure of my troubles.”

“ If I know my own heart,” exclaimed Henry, “ I would rather tear it from my bosom than occasion you any fresh discomfort ; but I would respectfully appeal to that frankness in yourself which you desired me to exercise, when I beseech you to declare whether the difficulties which you state to be insuperable, proceed from any personal objections of your own. In that case—”

“ What personal objections *can* I have to one whose character—I fear I must have acted very wrong, but when I found such pleasure in your society, I am sure I never thought—pleasure of any sort is to me so rare a sensation, that I did not reflect as I ought to have done. Forgive me, Mr. Melcomb, I am sadly confused, I scarcely know what I say ; but I meant to

remind you of poor Godfrey's state, over whose head there still hangs a criminal charge; to recal to your recollection my father's mental maladies, of which you have witnessed something, though you know not the frightful extent to which they are sometimes carried. You must have observed that I generally appear anxious and unhappy. Have I not cause for my dejection, and under such circumstances can you expect me to consult my own happiness, or to dream of marriage? My father, moreover, is not in a fit state to be left, and I will never, never abandon him."

"Yet your father himself, as it is rumoured, urges your marriage with Lord Fawley."

"Whom I know, from the authority of his physician, to be a dying man, and I have therefore offered no opposition to my father's projects, well aware that they were futile, and not wishing to occasion him any unnecessary irritation. For the same most weighty reasons, I dispute not beforehand his ambitious schemes for my advancement; but should the moment arrive when my duty to my Heavenly Father requires me to disobey my earthly parent, I

trust that my prayers and my sense of rectitude will inspire me with courage sufficient for the trial. No human consideration shall force me to the altar to commit a perjury. I will never marry one whom I do not reverence as well as love."

"But if you could unite yourself to one who would not require you to quit your father's side, who would be too happy to dwell with you beneath his roof, to become his companion and his friend, to share your filial attentions, to assist you in the blessed office of endeavouring to reconcile him to his son."

"Oh, Mr. Melcomb! do not flatter my poor wounded heart with visions of happiness that can never be realized. You do not know my father fully. He has set his whole concentrated desires upon seeing me advanced to dignities and titles."

"But if I could show him the folly of these lofty expectations, and reconcile him to a humbler son-in-law, might I have your sanction for aspiring to that honour?"

"Do not, in pity do not urge me upon this point. I dare not utter an untruth; it is not .

necessary that I should make any declaration whatever, for my father is a stern, inexorable man, to whom arguments and entreaties of this tendency would be all addressed in vain. He must not be exasperated—he is entitled to my duty—he requires pity and forbearance, not provocation.—See ! yonder are the poachers retiring through the park, the examination is over, he will be here immediately. Oh, Sir ! do not apply to him, do not say any thing to hurt the feelings of my dear, unhappy father !”—At these words the poor blushing, trembling girl, curtsied to Henry without daring to look at him, and hurried out of the room.

Welbeck being still detained for some time longer in the hall, Henry had leisure to revolve in his mind the conversation he had just been holding, and which, although it was not unmingled with painful sensations, had left a predominance of delicious impressions upon his heart. The paramount consideration that Emily was attached to him, for though her lips had not made this entrancing avowal, her manner had unequivocally betrayed it, was potent enough to fill him with hope, and blinded him to all the difficulties that opposed his suit ; difficulties

which, to a mere man of the world, would at once have appeared insuperable. But Henry, who contemplated the abstract propriety of things, much more than the established notions and customs of the world, saw no reason whatever why he should not aspire to the hand of Miss Welbeck, the rich heiress, nor why he should respect the absurd mistake of a father who would sacrifice his daughter's happiness to his own projects of ambition. As to those paroxysms of rage to which Welbeck was subject, he knew not why his proposition should excite them, nor if it did, why he should fear them. He thought Emily humoured her father's morbid eccentricities too much, his own observation and experience convincing him that a resolute opposition controlled his vehemence much better than a timid acquiescence. Henry was by nature frank, fearless, and decided; he hated suspense, and thus impelled, he resolved to inform Welbeck immediately of his attachment to his daughter, and to demand her in marriage.

Just as he had formed this determination, the Justice entered the room. "Well, young man," he cried as he advanced, rubbing his hands,

“What say you to the new master, to the fresh magician whom Emy has conjured from his hiding-place? What! shall we to work upon him, and forget these sorry poachers, whom I have just committed to prison, in the spirit-stirring adventures of Claudia and Rinaldo?”

“I have not yet opened the volume, for my own anxieties, and the interests of real life are of more momentous import to me at present than any fiction of the dramatist or the poet.”

“Are they? Then hasten to forget them, and strive, like me, to lose the wretched realities of existence in the world of imagination. But you are not like me. You have not forfeited your happiness; it is assured, and at your own command; it does not depend upon another.”

“Pardon me, Sir, it *does* depend in a very essential degree upon another — upon yourself!”

“Upon me, young man! You are pleased to be enigmatical, and I have no genius for solving riddles.”

“Nor have I the smallest disposition to propound them. Favour me with your attention

for a few minutes, and I will explain my meaning with the most perfect frankness and perspicuity." Henry then stated, shortly and explicitly, that in the numerous interviews and conversations with Miss Welbeck, which he had recently had the happiness of enjoying, her charms and virtues had made a profound impression upon his heart ; that he believed there existed a considerable congeniality of disposition between them ; that he was confident he could make her happy ; and that he therefore solicited the paternal sanction for paying her his addresses."

" You are pleased to be facetious, Sir," said Welbeck, who in spite of the seriousness of Henry's manner, could not believe him to be in earnest ; " is this a quotation from some play, or a sudden freak and *capriccio* of your own ?"

" I never assert any thing that is false, not even in sport ; and I should have hoped that my look and manner, not less than the peculiar delicacy of the subject, would have assured you that I am in earnest."

" Then, Sir, either you or I must be labour-

ing under a temporary hallucination of mind. Methought I was addressing Mr. Henry Melcomb."

"Upon that subject you are not in error; you cannot so soon have forgotten me."

"Ha! then it was only your birth-place, and the names of your parents, that had slipped my memory."

"If this be meant as a taunt, it is really one that I do not feel; because it is not my fault, but my misfortune, that I know not either my place of birth, or the names of my parents. I am not ashamed of being weighed by myself alone. If I have any worth, the want of ancestors cannot deprive me of it. If I have none, no pedigree could atone for my being without it."

"Very true and pointed, and yet very little to the point. You are aware, as I shrewdly conjecture, that Miss Welbeck is likely to be one of the richest heiresses in Hampshire?"

"I have heard so, but this constitutes no part of her attraction in my eyes."

"How singularly disinterested; and what implicit credit should we yield to such an asser-

tion, especially when we recollect that your own fortune consists of——”

“ One hundred pounds a year, as I have already stated.”

“ Or in other words, you are a pauper. May I then venture respectfully to inquire, what it is you propose to bestow upon my daughter in return for her charms, her virtues, and her wealth ?”

“ Myself !” exclaimed Henry, drawing himself up with an honest pride—“ A healthy frame, a sound mind, a heart that has never yet been contaminated by vice or dissipation, principles as honourable and as upright as her own, and a resolution to consecrate all these to the promotion of her happiness.”

Welbeck, who had hitherto spoken with a look and tone of the most cutting and contemptuous irony, now threw himself back in his chair, and uttered a sardonic “ Ha ! ha ! ha ! ha !”

“ Perhaps it appears ridiculous to you,” resumed Henry with great calmness, “ that a pauper, as you term him, should aspire to your daughter’s hand ; but if so, it is you who are ridiculous, not I, since it is precisely because

you are yourself opulent, that you can afford to dispense with riches in your son-in-law. As a disciple of Malthus, I should not myself have presumed to offer myself for Miss Welbeck, were it not reasonable to suppose that you would assist in the maintenance of your own daughter. The amount of her portion is to me a matter of perfect indifference ; it would depend, of course, upon your own generosity, or your own wishes as to her style of living ; but as you would probably not desire to lose the pleasure of her society, the Manor-house might still continue to be her home."

" And you would doubtless condescend to make it yours too. I thought so. Matchless spirit of accommodation ! Now, Sir, favour me with *your* attention for one minute, since I have listened to your outrageous, your frantic proposition with a calmness at which I am myself utterly amazed. I have only one single question to ask of you. Did Miss Welbeck in any way authorize you to make this application to me ?"

" Certainly not : on the contrary, she desired me never to mention the subject, either to herself, or to you ; and yet——"

“ Ha ! that is well ; it has taken a load from my heart, and I can breathe more freely. I want not to hear any more. Emy is a good girl ; she would not share the fate of the wretch whom I have cursed ; she would not be spurned from me for ever with unutterable loathing, hatred, and disgust ; she would not be disinherited, and see the proud fortune that is destined for her, if she obeys my wishes, bequeathed to a hospital ! As for you, Sir, this is my answer : Rather than give my consent to your marriage with my daughter, I would see her, dear as she is to me, lying in a shroud at my feet. The very preposterousness of your presumption has smothered up my anger in contemptuous wonderment ; but though I confess that I have heretofore found pleasure in your society, I now cast off your acquaintance utterly and for ever. I shall order the doors of the Manor-house to be shut against you ; and I warn you not to irritate a temper which may quickly be driven to desperation and fearful violence, by again presenting yourself within these walls, or presuming to seek any sort of communication with my daughter.—Not a word,

Sir, not a syllable ! I will not hear you. Be-gone ! and return no more."

So saying, Welbeck suddenly quitted the room, his rapid tread being heard outside, as he hurried along the passage that led to the back of the building ; while Henry, reluctantly quitting the house which he had been so imperiously forbidden never to revisit, and to the very walls of which he had now become attached, since it was the residence of his beloved Emily, proceeded slowly and disconsolately across the park on his way back to Thaxted.

CHAPTER IV.

Why are you virtuous?—

And wherefore are you gentle, strong, and valiant?

Know you not, master, to some kind of men

Their graces serve them but as enemies?

No more do yours : your virtues, gentle master,

Are sanctified and holy traitors to you.

Oh! what a world is this, when what is comely

Envenoms him that bears it!

AS YOU LIKE IT.

HENRY was now destined to experience in a very marked and painful manner the evanescent nature of popularity. He upon whom greatness, or, at least, nominal riches, had so lately been thrust by the mistakes and wilful exaggerations of the vain and officious Penguins, and who had in consequence received most wor-

shipful homage from the Dons and Hidalgos of the vicinity, but more especially from those provident mammas who had portionless daughters to settle: he, who as the successful and generous champion of the fair, had been the theme and darling of the commonalty, was shortly considered by a great portion of both classes as little better than an unprincipled, designing adventurer and fortune-hunter, who had come into Hampshire to see what he could pick up. This rapid revolution in public opinion was chiefly effected by the revengeful malice and indefatigable tongue of Mrs. Penguin; who, as if determined to exemplify the assertion, that "Hell has no fury like a woman scorned," lost no opportunity of traducing and blackening his character. According to her present version of circumstances, they had themselves been most shamefully imposed upon, in being given to understand that Henry was a near relation of the late most respectable Captain Tenby, whereas there was good reason to believe that he was a poor foundling, the probable offspring of vice and poverty, who had been adopted out of mere charity. His ima-

ginary wealth was now positively affirmed to have been a fabrication of his own, for which none but the most fraudulent motives could be assigned. His intrepidity and humanity in the business of the smugglers at Hordle Cliff, was attributed to a secret connexion with some of the gang, and a presumable interest in their cargo; and as to the affair of Lucy Haselgrove, it was plainly insinuated that he had himself, with an unexampled baseness, completed the ruin of that unhappy young woman, and had only turned her off and married her to Hodge Nettletop, when he became tired of her.

But it was for the alleged attempt upon her own virtue, that Mrs. Penguin reserved the most circumstantial and the most malevolent of her inventions. As it afforded her a fine opportunity for indulging her rancour against Henry, and establishing at the same time the unassailable purity of her own character against all future impugnors, she acted the Lucretia with prodigious bustle and loquacity; running about from house to house to detail the insidious and incessant artifices by which he had

attempted to seduce her from the paths of duty, the repeated efforts she had made to bring him to a due sense of his unprincipled conduct, and the pain with which she had at last found herself compelled to communicate his nefarious designs to her husband. When, in addition to all these insinuations and positive charges, it came to be publicly known that Henry had applied offensive terms to Captain Frampton, and then refused to fight him, it need excite little wonder that few could be found bold enough to stand up in his defence, or that many of his former acquaintance began pointedly to slight and avoid him. People had much rather be deceived into a bad opinion of a neighbour than into a good one, because they can much better afford to throw away scorn and abuse, than charity and approbation. They who had erroneously endowed Henry with opulence and high connexions, indignant at having been defrauded of their respect, even by their own mistake, now made ample amends by yielding an eager belief to all the disparaging rumours with which he was bespattered; and if two wrongs can make one right, there is no

doubt that they were justified in acting as they did.

To this ungenerous conduct there were, however, several honourable exceptions. Among the better classes, honest Frank Ringwood was Henry's staunchest supporter. Having reasons of his own for strongly suspecting Mrs. Penguin's arrogated purity, he cross-questioned the supposed delinquent as to the real state of the case; but Henry, remembering his pledge, refused to exonerate himself at the expense of a female, although she was at that moment endeavouring to ruin him with her calumnies. Ringwood was not the less persuaded of his innocence, and supported his opinion with his usual independence, by increasing their intimacy, and vindicating his friend wherever he went. Among the villagers, too, Henry retained many admirers and adherents, the most active and pugnacious of the whole party being Hodge Nettletop, who, throwing off his coat and waistcoat one market-day, in the midst of the assembled neighbourhood, offered to fight any man for half-a-guinea and a gallon of beer, who should dare to say that Mr. Melcomb was not

as brave a fellow and as true a gentleman as any in all Hampshire. It was particularly remarked that Bat Haselgrove the cartwright, who was supposed to have owed Henry a grudge ever since the wrestling-match at the fair, did not think proper to accept this challenge, though he was within hearing at the time it was thrown out.

As if all these slights, and slanders, and external annoyances had not been sufficient, Henry had to encounter the sordid spleen and ill-humour of Mrs. Tenby; who reproached him incessantly with having ruined all their fair prospects, and peevishly urged him to quit a neighbourhood where they were treated for all the world like Mohawks or Negroes. He could not bear, however, to withdraw from the vicinage of Emily Welbeck, whom he still hoped to encounter in one of his daily rambles; not without a vague expectation that some fortunate chance, though he could not define its nature, might effect a renewal of their intimacy, and remove the objections of her father. Nor was he in the least disposed to quit Thaxted

while his name and his character remained under a cloud.

“No, Madam!” he exclaimed to Mrs. Tenby, “I will meet my detractors face to face, and day by day. To turn my back upon them now, and to retreat, would be construed into an admission of my guilt. Truth, like the sun, may be clouded and obscured for a time, but it is not extinguished ; it may wait to choose its own opportunity for breaking out, but it will, it must ultimately prevail. You express wonder that I am as cheerful and self-possessed as if nothing had happened to me ; but it is under trials such as these that true fortitude asserts itself. The good opinion of our neighbours is doubtless desirable ; but if they ignorantly or maliciously pursue us with unmerited obloquy, we are not, by sinking into despondency, to punish ourselves for the faults or mistakes of others. Not the imputation, but the commission of a crime, should make us miserable ; and it is the great charm of virtue, that it renders a man independent of the world, by enabling him to derive his happiness from his own bosom.”

To elevated sentiments such as these, Mrs. Tenby generally replied by some poor Richard apophthegm, or a querulous Jeremiade in the doric dialect of Virginia, which, being not less offensive to the grammatical sensitiveness of Henry's ear, than repugnant to his moral notions, exposed him to endurances within doors that taxed his temper and his forbearance still more severely than the slights he was compelled to undergo whenever he went abroad. In both, however, he conquered: he never lost his temper or his self-possession; his brave, indomitable spirit was not to be quelled by any combination of circumstances, however untoward; or if his equanimity ever for a moment failed him, it was when he thought of Emily Welbeck and her trials, not when he reflected upon his own.

At this period Lady Susan Frampton, in pursuance of her plan for inveigling Lord Mossdale, and making him enamoured of Oakham-hall and her eldest daughter, by a succession of entertainments, projected an extensive party of pleasure in the Forest, the sequestered walks of which she deemed more favourable to

the developement of the tender passion, and the enjoyment of an interesting *tête-à-tête*, or regular declaration, than crowded drawing-rooms, and numerous listeners. Often and long did she sit in consultation with Miss Frampton, and sometimes with the Captain, making arrangements as to the individuals of whom the party should consist, and the spot that should form the object of their excursion. As to the former point, in addition to one or two of the neighbouring families whom we have not found it necessary to introduce into our pages, it was resolved to invite the Dotterels, Ringwood, Emily Welbeck, whom they settled to take in their own carriage, lest her father should offer to join the party, and the Penguins; the latter being avowedly included for the purpose of affording amusement by their vulgarity. As to Henry, he was of course entirely out of the question; even if the imputations under which he laboured had not been sufficient to exclude him, his alleged low birth and acknowledged poverty were insuperable bars to his admission at Oakham-hall. These preliminaries were adjusted with much more facility than the decision

of the place they were to visit, and the spot they were to select for their dinner; which it was intended to have *al fresco*, beneath the boughs of trees, in some romantic recess of the forest. The triangular stone set up near Minstead to commemorate the spot where William Rufus was slain; the Marlpit Oak; Burley Hill, on account of its grand view; the celebrated yew-tree in Dibdin Church-yard; and Cadenham Oak, in the vicinity of Lyndhurst, which, in rivalry of the celebrated Glastonbury thorn, had the reputation of budding at Christmas, were successively proposed and rejected, some as being too near, others as too distant. Captain Frampton recommended, with a most strenuous indolence of manner, that they should go to see a colt-hunt at Obergreen, in Longslade-Bottom, a bog of three miles in extent, crossed by a mole, along which numbers of the wild forest-horses are occasionally driven, and being intercepted by men concealed in the centre of the causeway, must either suffer themselves to be taken, or jump into the bog, where they are generally secured without difficulty. Upon this proposition, also, a negative was put by

Lady Susan, and it was finally decided that they should first visit the ruins of Beauley Abbey, proceed thence to a place called the Fighting Cocks, strike into the romantic woods in the direction of Culverley, and take their dinner in a beautiful little opening known by the name of the Poacher's Lawn. To save trouble, and the annoyance of conveying their own larder and table-paraphernalia, Tim Wicks, of the George, at Thaxted, was ordered to provide a cold collation at the spot indicated, as well as to supply all the proper requisites for the entertainment of both man and horse; a commission which he undertook with prodigious bustle and alacrity, being not less pleased by the expected profits of the job, than by the prospect of waiting upon so distinguished a company.

Oakham-hall was the place of *rendezvous* whence the assemblage proceeded; Lady Susan's barouche, which led the way, containing, besides her ladyship and her two daughters, Emily Welbeck, who, though she found little delight in society, and had no spirits for parties of pleasure, thought it incumbent upon her not to refuse invitations, or to evince any dislike

to company, at a moment when insinuations against her character might be darkly circulating in the neighbourhood. Even the knowledge that the odious Mrs. Penguin was to be of the party, did not deter her from joining it—a sense of duty to herself, and to her fair name, enabling her to conquer her repugnance. Doctor Dotterel's chariot, with his corpulent, club-tailed horses, followed, conveying only Miss Dotterel, for the good-natured Doctor stayed at the Hall to keep company with Mr. Frampton, who was laid up with the gout. Two phaetons and a pony-chaise, belonging to some of the other visitants, came next. Lord Mossdale, Captain Frampton, and Ringwood, were on horseback, and Mr. and Mrs. Penguin were allowed the honour of bringing up the rear, none of the gentlemen having accepted the lady's invitation to make a third in her gig, although she assured them it had been made wide and roomy, on purpose to accommodate a friend.

Proverbial as is the disobliging nature of the English climate, which seems to bear a particular ill-will towards rural parties of pleasure,

the weather, on the present occasion, proved propitious. When first they started, indeed, the morning was overcast, not darkly, but with a pervading gleaminess, which promised that the suppressed light would eventually pierce through its misty veil. It was a calm, soft, mild day of autumn, the hazy, semi-transparent atmosphere being rather an advantage than a detriment, as it afforded a beautiful medium for viewing the scenery, giving it grandeur and expansion, diffusing a mellow grey tint favourable to distance, and imparting to the landscape the appearance of an unfinished picture. As they advanced, partial sunbeams burst out in the distance, leaving the foreground in shade, but illuminating remote portions of the view with vivid light; an effect singularly striking and picturesque when it occurs amid forest scenery, and is favoured, as it happened to be in the present instance, by inequalities of surface. In a short time they lost these contrasts; the gauzy, filmy atmosphere became gradually thinner and clearer, the sun chased away the last remaining vapours, and an unclouded day

allowed them to contemplate the noble forest scenery through which they were riding in all the gorgeous tints of its autumnal drapery.

Every thing assumed a delightful and auspicious appearance, and a smile occasionally irradiated every countenance, except that of the pensive Emily, whose thoughts were upon the absent Henry and her unfortunate brother, when an act of malicious insubordination on the part of Lord Mossdale, threatened to disturb the harmony of some of the party, and to defeat the sole object for which it had been made. This object his Lordship saw through much more easily than Lady Susan imagined, and with an unaccountable perverseness of disposition, began to dislike Miss Frampton, in proportion as her beauty and accomplishments were obtrusively thrust upon his notice, for the palpable purpose of entrapping him; while he regarded Fanny with increasing admiration, the more she was disparaged by the rest of the family, and the more she herself repelled his attentions, and piqued his pride in her manifest preference of "Farmer" Ringwood. It had been settled, that whenever the party got out

of their carriages to walk in the forest, Lord Mossdale should take charge of Augusta, Lady Susan significantly observing, that the dear girl wouldn't be half so happy with any body else; but as it occurred to the Peer, that he himself would be much happier with another partner, and as he dearly loved, moreover, a little jocular mischief, he resolved to baulk the schemes of the maternal match-maker, to leave the fair "tuft-hunter" to whatever commoner would supply his place, and to anticipate and disappoint Ringwood by securing Fanny for himself. The carriages had struck out of the road, and were ascending a gentle, turfy knoll, to the brow of which the horsemen had all ridden forwards, when Fanny, always exhilarated by the sight of beautiful scenery, began half unconsciously to sing a cheerful ballad ditty, which bore some reference to the New Forest.

"May I inquire your reason for singing now, child, when there is nobody to hear you?" inquired Lady Susan, vexed at Fanny's having engrossed so much of Lord Mossdale's attention during their ride.

“Lud! I never do any thing for a reason, and therefore I can never give one.”

“I thought Lady Susan had been aware of that fact,” observed Augusta, tauntingly.

“It is enough for me to be cheerful upon impulse; but I suppose I sang for the same reason as the birds when they have nobody to hear them—because I am happy. Did you ever see any thing so inviting as this gentle grassy slope, nibbled down by the deer till it is as smooth as velvet? Now I warn you all beforehand, that I am going to make one of my silly speeches. I wish to fate there were no such thing in the world as strict propriety, and gentility, and formality of carriage, and *bienseance* and *retenue*, as I believe our neighbours call it; because, if there were no such demure, decorous nuisances in existence, I would have *such* a scamper over this delicious turf! You saw how the horses capered and pranced as soon as they got upon it. Well, my heart is gambolling about in my bosom just in the same way, and my feet are absolutely longing for a race, which I would positively have had with Snowball, if we had brought her with us; for one

may run a race with a dog, I suppose! Do you know, Augusta, I have a strong suspicion, that I was meant by Nature to be a wood-nymph?"

"You did well to prepare us for nonsense. I'm sure no one would think you were meant by Nature to be my child," said Lady Susan, snappishly.

"Perhaps Nature meant me to be her own; and if so, it would be undutiful not to call and pay my respects to her. At all events, I cannot bear to be mewed up a moment longer, or to continue seated when I am in so august a presence." So saying, she opened the door of the carriage, which was proceeding very slowly, and jumping upon the turf, exclaimed, "Now, don't be alarmed, Lady Susan; I promise you I will not be vulgar, at least not more than I can help: I won't go beyond a trip; and you know, fays, and sylphs, and elves, and all sorts of genteel little sprites like myself, are allowed to trip upon the grass, even though it be not lighted up by the moon, nor marked with a fairy circle." And she frolicked forwards to

some little distance a-head of the carriage, half dancing, and half running.

Lord Mossdale and Ringwood, perceiving that she had alighted, galloped back to offer their services, but as the former had the start, and was besides better mounted, he would have won the prize, had he not waited a few seconds to let his groom take charge of his horse, in which interval Ringwood passed him, slipped from the back of his mare, and had given his arm to Fanny before his competitor had dismounted. The latter, evidently disconcerted, walked on the other side of Fanny, determined at all events that they should not enjoy a *tête-à-tête*; and Lady Susan, who had marked the whole proceeding with a mortification which put her out of humour for the rest of the day, called angrily to Fanny, when they had reached the summit of the ascent, desiring her to return into the carriage, that they might proceed more rapidly, exclaiming in the same breath, "You were mistaken, my Lord; you took it for Augusta, I presume."

"No, indeed," replied Lord Mossdale, dryly,

“ I never suspected Miss Frampton of jumping so nimbly from the carriage.”

Augusta's smile scarcely disguised the bitter feeling at her heart, and Lady Susan, willing to convert the observation into a compliment to her eldest, and a rebuke of her youngest daughter, said, “ I don't wonder that your Lordship thought Augusta incapable of such an indecorum : it is a freak that no one but Fanny would think of.”

The whole cavalcade now advanced at a quicker pace, and in due time reached one of the wooded heights that surround the circular valley in which the ruins of Beauley Abbey are situated. Here it had been preconcerted that they should descend from their carriages and horses, and walk to the abbey ; and here, accordingly, there was a new trial of jockeyship, between Lord Mossdale and Ringwood, for the possession of Fanny's arm. Lady Susan, however, being determined not to be thwarted in her dispositions, called the former to the door of the barouche, and requested him to take charge of Augusta ; so that all his Lordship's restive designs were frustrated, and he was obliged, in

spite of himself, to act as squire to the "tuft-hunter" for the remainder of the day. This he did with a sufficiently bad grace, nor was he conciliated by the deportment of his partner, who, though she could not be otherwise than courteous to a nobleman, was unable to conceal altogether the mortification that preyed upon her spirits, and did not by any means improve the quality of her temper.

Nothing could be more characteristic than the respective demeanour of the two sisters as the party made their way through the beautiful woods of Beaulieu. Augusta, dressed most expensively, and adhering with consummate nicety to the last fiat of fashion, looked as if she had just stepped out of a glass-case, and presented a *tout ensemble* much better adapted to a London drawing-room, than to the wild scenes of the New Forest. In order to display to the best advantage the beauty of her fairy feet, she had compressed them into such small shoes, that she walked slowly, and with visible difficulty; the narrow compass into which her waist was screwed impeded the natural and easy movement of her body as well as of her arms; she

had no eyes for the beauty of the scenery around her, or for the distant views that occasionally opened, her whole attention being absorbed in saving her dress from the bushes, or her thin shoes from being soiled, as she won her way with a mincing, French step, casting a distasteful look at every object that threatened to derange the exquisite and finished economy of her appointments.

Fanny was attired in a simple though not inelegant morning-dress, and it was fortunate, as Lady Susan observed, that she wore nothing more costly, for as she tripped nimbly from one spot to another, (she protested against its being called a run,) half wild with exuberant spirits, and thinking of nothing but where the finest views were to be obtained, she twice tore her robe, and had once very nearly lost her shoe, misadventures which only afforded her fresh occasion for laughter. “A thought has come into my head, a serious thought,” she gaily exclaimed to Ringwood, “and as that is a rare occurrence, I *must* tell it you. Do you know, that, judging by my own feelings, I imagine there would be much less sorrow and wretchedness

in the world, if people were more frequently carried out of themselves by visiting such grand scenes as these, and admiring the beauties of Nature. Look ! look ! what a noble prospect we get from this little knoll ! Yonder is Boldre Church, which, like all those in the Forest, is loftily situated, showing its embattled head above a sea of trees. And in this direction we can just get a peep, through the boughs, of Beaulieu Abbey, and the winding river beyond, which as the tide is luckily up, almost assumes the dignity of a lake, uniting itself to the Channel, and nobly terminated in the distance by the Isle of Wight hills. How picturesque are yonder ragged ponies and stunted cows, the wealth of the poor forest borderers, huddled together upon the tongue of land that shoots out into Souley Ponds ! Not that way : look to the left, under the great beech ; and in the same direction you may see Crockford Water, and Badsley. Lud ! we mustn't loiter in this manner ; we must scamper on—no, that's vulgar : I mean, we must trip on, or we shall lose our company."

" A loss to which I can cheerfully submit,"

said Ringwood, “ so long as I have yours : and really, familiar as I am with its scenery, I wish not to be hurried through this delightful Forest lane.”

“ Delightful, indeed ! though that is too tame a word ; for these majestic trees impart a character of grandeur to the scene, standing out, as our green alley narrows or extends, in bold and diversified groups, which make the foreground as various as are the ever-changing openings into the remoter woods, copses, lawns, glades, heaths, and umbrageous recesses of the Forest.—Ah ! I don’t like the deep, hollow, sepulchral sound of that woodman’s axe : and hark ! there is another, still more distant, tolling the knell of some noble oak or elm. I hope we shall not pass them, for to me, nothing is so melancholy as the sight of a still verdant tree, lying like a prostrate, recently-slain corpse. Look ! look ! did you see those deer bounding across by yonder tall Italian poplar, that nods and waves like an ostrich-feather in a lady’s head ? I wonder how this slim foreigner found admittance among our sturdy oaks and elms ? There again, is a new opening, still finer than

any we have seen: it is like walking along a magnificent gallery of pictures ; and such, indeed, they are, all painted by a Divine hand.— Now, don't laugh at me, Mr. Ringwood, for being thrown into such ecstasies. I know Lady Susan and Augusta would ; but if you dare to make game of me, I'll send you back all your auriculas, and crumpling apples, and Snowball, besides ; so you know what you have to expect !”

Ringwood declared that the flowers and apples were quite safe, as he had never yet found occasion to laugh at her, though he had often enjoyed the happiness of laughing with her ; adding, that though the scenery was not new to him, he was scarcely less delighted at its beauty than herself. Thus chatting together, they at length emerged from the woods, and hastening down the valley with more activity than the others had exercised, were enabled to join the rest of the party just as they were about to enter the ruins of the Abbey. No sooner had they gained the interior of the pile, than Penguin, taking his hammer from his pocket, chipped off a small fragment of the wall, pro-

nouncing, with no small share of geological pomposity, the name of the stone, and the quarry whence it had been probably brought.

“ Lord ! Mr. P.” cried the wife, “ who but you would have thought [of bringing your hammer upon such an occasion as this ?”

“ It seems unnecessary, indeed,” whispered Lord Mossdale, who sometimes attempted a joke, “ for wherever Mr. P. travels, I apprehend he must carry a ninny-hammer with him.”

“ Nay, now, Mossdale ! I must parteeicularly request you won’t make me laugh,” drawled Captain Frampton, “ for it hurts my cracked lip enawmously ; does indeed, ’pon my honour !”

“ La ! and so the monks lived here once, did they ?” wheezed Miss Dotterel, whose corpulency little fitted her for pedestrian excursions. “ Well, it *is* a pretty place, now, isn’t it ? But what a long way from any market ; and I wonder what they did about beer, for they could never brew, you know, with the water of Beaulley River. Those monks, considering they were all ignorant Papists, *did* know what they were

about, for it 's a sweet situation, now isn't it? But I shouldn't think meat would keep well in such a damp place, should you, Lady Susan?"

Her Ladyship did not vouchsafe any answer to this interesting inquiry; but Miss Frampton, at the mention of the word "damp," immediately put her hand to her curls, to feel whether they had lost any of their crispness, and looked towards the entrance, as if anxious to retreat.

"I shall not easily forget these ruins," said Ringwood, "for it was here that we killed a fox last year, after the hardest run I ever had in my life."

Lord Mossdale and Captain Frampton were inquiring into the particulars of this chace, when a figure emerged from the farther extremity of the ruins, and had no sooner come into the light so as to be recognised, than Mrs. Penguin, with an affected cry of agitation, exclaimed, "Heavens! it is that odious, horrid, unprincipled Henry Melcomb! What business has the fellow here? He has proved himself to be a skirking poltroon; so I do hope, my dear Mr. P.

that you will now show yourself to be a man, by kicking him publicly out of the ruins."

"As to kicking, my dear," replied the husband, "that's vulgar; and besides, one might as well have a kicking-match with a young horse. But, as I scorn to be afraid of any man, upon any thing like equal terms, I have no objection to throw my hammer at the cowardly fellow, if all the gentlemen here will agree to stand by me."

"Leave this affair to me," said Captain Frampton, "I have been particuarly anxious to meet this skulking chap, and I am glad I have so public an opportunity of treating him as he deserves; I am, 'pon my honour!" By this time the subject of their conversation had nearly reached them, when the Captain, advancing towards him, continued, "I don't know, Sir, what may be the custom in America, but in this country, when a man applies abusive terms to another, and refuses to give him the satisfaction of a gentleman, we treat him in this manner." As he lifted up his riding-stick in a menacing attitude, Emily Welbeck uttered a cry of terror, closed her eyes, and clung shud-

dering to her companion. But there was no ground for her apprehensions, for Henry, seizing the uplifted stick in his left-hand, put one foot behind his assailant, and giving him a sudden push at the same time, he fell backwards upon the ground, leaving the stick in the hands of Henry, who broke it, and throwing the pieces behind him, said in a calm but resolute tone, "For your own sake, Captain Frampton, I warn you to refrain from any farther attempts of this nature; for though I keep my temper in tolerable subjection, I cannot always be answerable for it, and I might be provoked to do something which we should both of us have occasion to regret.—Ladies! Miss Welbeck! be not alarmed, I intreat you. I am sorry that self-defence compelled me to this unpleasant proceeding; but there is no injury whatever inflicted upon this prostrate gentleman, who threatened me with chastisement. I have taken care not to hurt him: another time he must take care of himself." With these words, he bowed courteously to the company, and walked out of the ruins, Penguin drawing carefully back behind his companions to let him pass, and neither Lord

Mossdale nor any of the other gentlemen betraying the least desire to arrest his retreat.

“ I suppose the blackguard learned this ruffianly trick in America,” said the Captain, jumping up with more activity than seemed natural to him, and protesting, in answer to the eager inquiries of his friends, that he was not in the least hurt. “ I have held my stick over the fellow’s shoulders,” he continued, “ which is equivalent to a caning.”

“ Is it ?” said Miss Dotterel : “ La ! what odd ways you gentlemen have ! Why, then, the fall he gave you must be equivalent to a kicking. It *was* a bad fall, now, wasn’t it ? and I ’m sure your shoulder must be bruised. Indeed, you had better rub it when you get home with some of your father’s opodeldoc ; it’s a capital thing, for it was only last Friday week, that Giles Patching——”

The interesting episode of Giles Patching was lost to the company and to the world by the loud and opprobrious epithets of “ Blackguard ! ruffian ! Yankee ! and ungentlemanly poltroon ! and cowardly fellow !” showered upon Henry by some of the party, and by none more

loudly and bitterly than by Mrs. Penguin, Ringwood, however, frankly declaring, that he thought no gentleman warranted in attempting personally to assault another; and the still trembling Emily Welbeck, feeling in her inmost heart, though she dared not avow it with her lips, perfect approbation of Henry's manliness and forbearance. Some one proposed, that after such an unpleasant occurrence, they should return home, as the ladies might be too much agitated to find any pleasure in prosecuting their excursion: but the Captain scouted this idea as "parteicularly prepawsterous," insisting upon their proceeding, and affecting an unusual flow of spirits to conceal the real mortification of his feelings. He was conscious that he had been placed in a humiliating predicament, and could lay no flattering unction to his soul, except reiterating the assertion, that he had done all he intended by flourishing his stick over the fellow's head. Lady Susan, having vented her indignation against Henry in no very measured terms, observed, that it would be derogatory to their own dignity, were they to suffer him to spoil their day's sport;

adding, that as he was now as much degraded and dishonoured as he possibly could be, they had better dismiss the young savage altogether from their thoughts, and resolve to enjoy themselves for the remainder of the day, according to their original intentions. Poor Emily Welbeck sighed as she thought how little enjoyment there would be for her ; but she could not quit her party, she had no means of conveyance home, and therefore accompanied them with a heavy heart out of the ruins to an adjacent spot, to which the carriages and horses had been ordered round, when they all remounted, and skirting Beasley River, in the direction of Lyndhurst, proceeded upon their party of pleasure.

CHAPTER V.

I would o'erstare the sternest eyes that look,
Outbrave the heart most daring upon earth,
Yea, mock the lion when he roars for prey,
To win thee, lady.

* * * *

How many cowards wear yet upon their chins
The beards of Hercules and frowning Mars,
Who, inward searched, have livers white as milk.

MERCHANT OF VENICE.

THE upper portion of the river, along the banks of which they were now riding, being swollen by the tide, assumed the appearance of a little lake, surrounded with woods and high grounds, and animated by flocks of gulls, cormorants, and the various sea-fowl that frequent our friths and estuaries; while the surface of the waters below Beaulieu Bridge, and as far as Needsore Point, was studded with fishing-

smacks, or other light vessels. As they advanced, however, the river soon dwindled into a sluggish little bull-rush stream, though the Forest views before them kept increasing in grandeur and beauty; the ground in one part suddenly falling, and then rising again at a little distance with such abruptness that the quality of the different trees, as they towered amphitheatrically above one another, might be distinctly recognised. Of the foliage, enough remained to fall into tufts from the effects of light and shade, while the yellow leaves of the elm, the orange of the beech, the ochreous tints of the oak, the deep red of the sycamore, and other fading hues, gorgeous as they were, blended softly and harmoniously with the fallen leaves, that imparted to the ground the appearance of rich mosaic work. Exhilarated by the beauty of the scene, and the fineness of the weather, the party seemed quickly to have forgotten the recent misadventure amid the ruins; their voices were merry and loud, small jokes occasioned great laughter, and the excursion promised to terminate much more pleasantly than it had begun. As they reached the ex-

tremity of the manor of Beauley, they came to the Fighting Cocks, a spot well known to the lurking poacher, and one where, as Lord Mossdale wittily observed, there was no chance of their again encountering the Yankee, at least, if there was to be any sympathy or accordance between the name of the place and its visitants. At this spot the whole party again dismounted, Sam Ostler, of the George, being in attendance to assist the local authorities of the stable in taking charge of the cattle; an office which he did not discharge without giving offence to Penguin, whose mare's knee he immediately began to inspect and rub, saying at the same time, "Well! the hair be grown again I see; but I say, Muster Penguin, us be close to Lady Cross Lodge here, so you must look sharp not to throw she down again. Wonder you hadn't a'drove into Beauley River as you did into Avonwater-Bottom! Wauns! only to think of that there! But lord! it baint so strange, a'ter all; for besides that 'ere sousing at the Miller's-run, you'd very nearly ha' got your ownself chucked right into the horsepond

at the fair time ! Heart alive ! how Tony and I did laugh when us heard on't !”

“ Hold your saucy tongue, fellow !” cried Mrs. Penguin, angrily ; “ you forget that you are talking to your betters.”

Sam held both his own tongue and the mare's bridle until the geologist and his wife had alighted ; when he whispered to his comrade, “ I say, Jerry ! the grey mare's the better horse of that 'ere pair, if 'taint, I'm bless'd !”

From this spot the whole company, attaching themselves to the same partners as before, proceeded on foot, plunging into the deep woods and wild scenes of the Forest, in the direction of Culverley Heath, but not intending to go farther than Poacher's Lawn, the place where they were to dine, and which was at no great distance from the Fighting Cocks.

Fanny Frampton possessed in an eminent degree that happy faculty, if it may not rather be dignified with the name of a sixth sense, which consists in a peculiar susceptibility to pleasurable impressions from the view of picturesque forms and combinations, whether grand

or minute, and which, conferring upon its happy possessor an interest in almost every object, gives a keener relish to existence, especially amid rural scenes. It was not alone the majesty of woods and waters, "and all the dread magnificence of Heaven," that delighted her; her eye was proportionably gratified in admiring the graceful configuration of the tall fern, with its dark-brown, polished stem, the beautiful varieties of the heath, and the diversified tints of the moss; from the pale green velvet that paints the trunk of the beech, to the straw-colour of the elm, and the rich brimstone and black with which the oak is stained. Even a deer-shed, a keeper's lodge, a pile of bark, a stack of faggots, or a timber-wain drawn by oxen, and heaving slowly up out of the far depths of the forest, or "ponderously ringing down the rough slope," had attractions for her eye; and in a scene such as that through which she was now passing, where all these humbler charms were occasionally combined with the more splendid beauties of Nature, it is needless to state that her enjoyment was keen, to a degree of ecstasy that she had rarely before expe-

rienced. So potently was she impressed, that the intensity of delight made her serious, and it was with a tone and look of grave, deep feeling, that she ejaculated, "Really, the beauty of these woods is quite affecting, almost overpowering!"

"Excaissively fine! 'pon my honour, Fanny!" drawled the Captain, who had overheard the observation, though it was addressed to Ringwood; "but they want more bushes and underwood to afford cover for the game. Haven't seen a single phaisant to-day. Mossdale says half these lumbering trees should be grubbed up and burnt, for they stand too thick either for shooting or hunting."

"Lud! what an idea!" exclaimed Fanny; "I was really becoming quite pensive and sentimental, but the sound of your voice has made me, I fear, as flighty as ever. Well, after all, I feel more at home in my own character of a simpleton, or a giddy girl, which ever you please to call me.—Come! shall we talk nonsense again, and proceed?"

They went forward for some little distance, when their progress was delayed by an impedi-

ment from which not even the happy alchemy of Fanny's mind could extract anything either picturesque or pleasing. It was one of those immense herds of hogs, which in the *pawnage* month, as part of the autumnal season is termed, are frequently encountered in the Forest, but more especially in Boldrewood-Walk, on account of the profusion of its beech mast. Ringwood explained to the party, that the forest borderers had a right, at this period, to turn in their hogs, on paying a trifle to the steward's court at Lyndhurst; and that the swineherd, who generally takes charge of a drove of five or six hundred at once, by feeding them in the first instance to the sound of a horn, could always collect them afterwards, and prevent their straying, by means of the same rude music. For the passage of these most inharmonious and unaccommodating wayfarers the whole party stood aside, not without several distasteful looks and ejaculations from Miss Frampton, when they resumed their progress, and in a few minutes reached the Poacher's Lawn; a romantic little opening, skirted with noble trees, through whose vistas there were two or three beautiful

views in the direction of Lady Cross Lodge and Culverley Heath.

In this inviting spot, beneath the boughs of a beech-tree, such as Tityrus would have loved, the tasteful Tim Wicks had spread out a table, flanked with wooden-forms, and covered with all the delicacies that his larder could supply, his daughter Sally suggest, or crooked Martha the cook fabricate and compound. A handsome booth had been set up to afford shelter in the event of rain, and the landlord's light cart, drawn by old Ball, was in attendance to run over the turf to the public house, should anything have been omitted that could be supplied from that rural caravansary. The apparent completeness of these arrangements, and above all, the sight of the handsomely-covered dinner-table, proved not a little acceptable to a company whose appetites were whetted by exercise; while the sight of Lord Mosssdale and Augusta, approaching arm-in-arm, and chatting together with apparent cordiality, had power for the moment to dissipate some of that disappointment and chagrin which rankled at Lady Susan's heart, though her countenance wore its habitual smile.

“ Upon my word, Mr. Wicks,” she exclaimed, willing to amuse her friends with his malapropisms ; “ you have set us out a much handsomer collation than I expected ; and I hope you will do us the farther favour of officiating as carver ?”

“ Oh, my Lady !” said the landlord, bustling, and bowing, and scraping to every individual that came up ; “ you are very good ; but you must recollect you are not at the George, where one has the whole trigonometry of the dinner-service all within the segment of a circle, and if you want anything, you may pop right, slap-bang, point-blank, down upon the fulcrum, as a body may say.—Tony ! take off Squire Ringwood’s spurs !—As to feasts, my Lady, we have nothing better than luncheons in our times—nothing like Belshazzar’s feast, or Antony and Cleopatra’s, and such like. Prime jobs those ! Wonder how much they would stand a-head in our days ?”

“ I perceive you are read both in sacred and profane literature,” said Lady Susan.

“ Profane !” ejaculated Tim, with a demure, not to say horrified look ; “ I can assure your

Ladyship I never read anything profane in my whole life. No inverse ratio nor comic sections about Tim Wicks; all rectilinear. When I can't go to church, I read every Sunday the Lethargy of the Church of England, as every man ought to do, who is a friend to the glorious Revolution effected by Martin Lutherbourg.— Any Gemman or Lady like pigeon-pie? 'cause if they do, let them try this: crooked Martha's a perfect paradox at pigeon-pies—quite a polygon of a cook! — Tony! bring lobster-sallad! — Sarvant, Mr. Penguin; got some syllabubs for you, made by Sally's own hand. Never come to the George now, Sir. Haven't seen you since the fair. Lord! only to think of their taking you for a thief!—Capital fair, Sir, a'ter all; took eight pounds from the first crowd that collected; the *primum mobile*, as I called it; neither chalk nor score, but all hard money, right, slap-bang, point-blank, down upon the fulcrum!"

"All right, all right," said Penguin; "and you found time, I believe, to see some of the sports of the fair, notwithstanding."

"Yes, Sir; saw all the wild beasts, the qua-

drupeds, and parallelo-bipeds, that show you the whole trigonometry of Nature in one diameter. But the conjurer, Sir ; wasn't he a regular rhomboid of a fellow ? Hey ! presto, pass ! and he would transmogrify you a flat parallelogram into an atmospherical body, afore you could say Jack Robinson ! Many things he did, I could have sworn was a moral impossible, and I felt so frustrated, that I'm sure you might have knocked me down with a capillary tube. Then the ventriloquist ! did you ever hear such a chap as that ? Couldn't believe my own ears ; thought it must be an optical delusion.—Tony ! you'll never draw that cork. Keep your diagonal line perpendicular. Can't you proportion your velocity to the pressure, so as to let the axis revolve upon its own impetus.—D'ye catch the focus, hey ?—Pop ! There ! that comes of treating the matter mathematically, and according to a pacific proposition."

" He were such a rum customer," said Tony, turning the cork round and examining it, instead of pouring out the wine.

" We've no rum customers here," said his master, " and so I brought none with me,

though I have some rare old Jamaica at the George.—Ladies and Gentlemen, you will excuse Tony, he only spoke in a metaphor.”

“Sure enough, such a cork I never met afore, nor no one else !” cried Tony, at length beginning to pour out the wine.

“Dear heart, Miss !” ejaculated Wicks, addressing himself to Emily, “not a word has come out of your mouth, nor a morsel gone into it, all this time. Won’t you take this wing of a chicken ?—well, then, you must positively take some tongue, for you seem to want that, at all events.—Beg pardon, hope no offence, but every body knows Tim Wicks is a little bit of a wag.”

Poor Emily, who had no spirits either for talking or eating, was the only silent and inactive person in the whole party. The forest scenes had recalled to her mind still more vividly her occasional meetings with her unfortunate brother ; the alarming occurrence in the ruins of Beaufrey Abbey had agitated her nerves ; and it saddened her whole soul to reflect, that while her nearest and dearest relatives were alienated from each other, and suffering under

afflictions different in their origin, though similar in the keen distress they respectively occasioned, she herself had bestowed her heart, a fact she could no longer conceal, upon one who was not only indignantly rejected by her father, but seemed to be an object of misrepresentation and opprobrium to nearly the whole vicinity.

Both Fanny and Miss Dotterel kindly tried to rouse her from her melancholy, but both forbore when they saw that it rather distressed her to have her depression noticed. So far from being infected by her sadness, the others indulged freely in the exhilaration and loud merriment which the beautiful scenery, fine weather, and the social excitement of the board, were so well calculated to inspire; and when they had concluded their gay repast, they all agreed to proceed to a spot beyond a clump of trees in front of them, from which was to be obtained a finer view of Lady Cross Woods, and a glimpse over the extensive heath between Bealey and Lymington Rivers. The place indicated formed a running knoll or tufted bank, hanging over a little shrubby dell on the op-

posite side of the Poacher's Lawn, and to this point the party proceeded, laughing and chatting, and little dreaming of the unwelcome objects they were approaching.

From the bustle of preparation at the George-inn, and the talk of the loquacious landlord, Henry had learnt the whole plan of Lady Susan's party, as well as that Emily was to join it, and resolved, with the true feelings of a lover, to hover around the company in the Forest, anticipating the pleasure of seeing his mistress at all events, and not without a vague expectation that some happy chance might afford him an opportunity of conversing with her, especially as she was to be unaccompanied by her father. It was rather, however, a desire to see the ruins, than any thought of waiting there for Emily, that had carried him to Beauley Abbey, where he understood the company were not to arrive until an hour later, and whence he meant to proceed before there should be any chance of his meeting them. This mistake or misinformation as to time, had occasioned his rencounter with Captain Frampton, immediately after

which, he hurried towards Beauley Woods, crossed the Poacher's Lawn, and climbing one of the tall trees that overhung the tufted bank we have been describing, had, from his ensconced perch amid the leaves, enjoyed the satisfaction of contemplating Emily during the whole time of the repast. That this was a freak little consonant with his philosophical habits, or with the character of one who had not much romance in his composition, and who studied usefulness in all his pursuits, we readily coincide ; but Henry had, at least, the excuse of Benedick, when he called himself a "utilitarian," he did not know that he should ever live to be in love.

We have said that the company, in their advance towards the knoll, were approaching more than one unwelcome object. Henry, after what had lately occurred, might be deemed entitled to this appellation ; but the more appalling spectacle wherewith they were to be scared, although not entirely without precedent, even in our own country, was of a nature so singularly strange and marvellous, that we must proceed to account for it, before we venture

to record its appearance. One of the large caravans of wild beasts which had been exhibited at Thaxted fair, after having travelled into Dorsetshire, was returning across the New Forest towards Southampton, when it was accidentally overturned near Culverley. It contained a lion and lioness, separated at the time from one another by a moveable grated division. The door of one of the dens was forced open by the fall, the lion leaped out, and escaped in the direction of Beauley Woods, ranging here and there at full speed in the joy of his recovered liberty, until he came to the tufted bank near the Poacher's Lawn, when he stretched himself luxuriously beneath it, for the purpose of taking breath, and enjoying a little rest. Both these objects threatening to be defeated by the noisy merriment of Lady Susan's gay party as it approached, the animal vaulted over the intervening bushes, and uttering a loud roar, descended upon the bank, only a few yards in advance of the assemblage.

The piercing shrieks, the agony of terror, and the tumultuous rush of flight that instan-

taneously ensued, must be left to the imagination, for they cannot be described. Henry, who had witnessed the occurrence, urged by a sudden impulse to offer himself to the rage of the wild beast, and thus, perhaps, be the means of saving Emily and others of his fellow-creatures from destruction, dropped in a second from bough to bough, and alighted upon the grass almost within reach of the lion, shouting aloud to the fugitives, "To the cart! to the cart! Save Emily Welbeck! Save the ladies!" Ere the words had escaped his lips, they to whom they were addressed had all disappeared amid the trees, with the exception of Emily, who having been deserted by her companion, Captain Frampton, had staggered a short way, and then fallen fainting upon the grass. Henry recognised her as she sunk to the earth, and the recollection that she was completely in the power of the terrible animal before him, determined him to oppose its progress, or rather, for he was totally unarmed, to give himself up as a sacrifice, in the hope that she might in the mean time recover, and effect her escape. Hopeless as

was the struggle with such an adversary, it was not in his valorous nature to fall an unresisting prey ; he knew that he possessed great muscular power, and he resolved to lose no chance of preserving his own life that might be compatible with the safety of Emily. That he should contemplate the probable result of such an unequal and terrific contest without a thrill of horror in his senses, and a sudden appalment of his spirit, it is not meant to assert ; for no man can confront a sudden, unexpected, and frightful death, without some human shudderings ; but he faltered not in his firm resolution, he steeled his heart as well as he could against the natural abhorrence that made it throb violently in his bosom, and having placed himself in the position which he thought best calculated to hide Emily, he awaited the assault of his terrible antagonist.

When Henry had first dropped from the tree, the lion, startled at such an unexpected apparition, had drawn back two or three paces, pointing his ears, gently waving his tail, and eyeing him with a fixed attention, in which position and attitude he still remained, without

indicating any hostile intentions. Henry, on the other hand, surveyed the beast with a transfixed, intent gaze, during which thrilling survey he recognised him for the individual lion which he had seen exhibited at Thaxted fair. On that occasion his keeper had gone into his den, rubbed his forehead, and wrestled with him, loudly vaunting, however, that if any other man in England should be rash enough to attempt the same liberty, he would be instantly torn in pieces. From the present quietness of the animal, and the absence of all ferocity in the expression of its grave-looking, earnest features, Henry believed it to be much more tame than it had been represented; and having heard that it was the generous nature of this beast to respect those who, instead of betraying fear and flying, met it with boldness and confidence, he resolved upon the perilous experiment of advancing towards the formidable quadruped, and rubbing its forehead, as he had seen done by the keeper. For this purpose he walked forwards with a firm step and an undaunted mien, the animal remaining all the time in the same posture as before, and

receiving with perfect quietness, and an evident complacency, the rude sort of greeting to which it had been accustomed. At this moment Henry's heart fairly leaped in his bosom, for he felt electrified with a sudden hope of life and safety to himself, to Emily, and to her companions.

Fresh apprehensions, however, shot through his bosom, when the lion, thinking, probably, that it was to go through the whole exhibition to which it had been habituated, reared itself upon its hind legs, rested its huge paws upon Henry's shoulders, and looked down upon him with its large black bright eyes, opening at the same time its mouth, and displaying its white fangs and cavernous gorge. In this appalling crisis, Henry felt that his only course was to imitate the actions of the keeper, whom he had seen in this way walk round the cage, and he accordingly took several steps backwards, purposely retreating in such a direction that they lost sight of Emily by the intervention of some trees, when his adversary voluntarily dropping his paws upon the ground, he again began to propitiate him by rubbing his forehead. In

this manner, for the same operation was repeated several times, he contrived gradually to decoy his four-footed companion along the edge of the bank, until they were at some distance from the spot where he had first appeared. During this process, his courage and confidence kept continually increasing, but still he felt utterly at a loss what course to adopt, or how to effect his escape. At times, he looked around him for a convenient tree up which he might attempt to spring, meaning again to descend and intercept the animal should it bend its course toward Emily; but in the contrary event, to seek her himself, and remove her to some place of safety. No such mode of escape immediately occurring, he tried to withdraw himself, so as to avoid any appearance of flight, hoping that the lion, satisfied with the wrestling match they had had together, might allow him to take his leave. But in this expectation he found himself completely mistaken, the animal invariably cutting off his retreat, with an evident determination not to lose sight of him, though without any immediate manifestation of hostile intentions. This alarming resolution

proved not a little discouraging to his prisoner, who began now to apprehend that he was pretty much in the predicament of the mouse, around which the cat gambols and makes all sorts of amicable manifestations, until it thinks proper, when it becomes weary of its capricious clemency, to destroy and devour its victim.

It was with a proportionate satisfaction, therefore, that he saw a prospect of deliverance approaching from a quarter whence he had little anticipated it. The peasants of Culverley, although they had willingly assisted in setting up the overturned caravan, could not be persuaded by the keeper to assist him in the recovery of the truant lion, in spite of his asseverations that the animal was perfectly tame. Some of them had heard him affirm the contrary at Thaxted Fair, and as both averments could not be true, they chose to credit that which afforded them a valid excuse for declining any interference in so perilous an affair. Hodge Nettletop, however, who happened to be passing at the time, and who was naturally an obliging and stout-hearted fellow, offered his

own services, as well as those of Farmer Patching's staunch bull-dog, which accompanied him, an overture which was gladly accepted. The caravan was accordingly driven into the Forest, in the direction the runaway had taken, Hodge acting as guide through the turfy avenues and rude roads with which Beauley Woods were pierced, until they approached the little shrubby dell and tufted bank whence the lion had burst upon the astounded party. His roar guiding his pursuers to the spot, they skirted the dell, and came in sight of the object they were seeking, just as Henry began to be visited by those unpleasant misgivings as to his ultimate fate, which we have stated. It was Hodge's first impulse, at sight of the monster, to seek safety by climbing up a tree; but he had no sooner ascertained that the individual, whom the animal seemed to have taken prisoner, was Henry Melcomb, his benefactor, his liberator, the preserver of his Lucy, than he abandoned every thought of flight, determined at all risks to effect his deliverance, if it were possible.

It was destined that this most critical moment should afford a striking illustration of the old

adage, than an injudicious ally is more dangerous than an enemy ; for the bull-dog, one of the most ferocious of the breed, flew fiercely towards the lion, baying loudly, as if meditating an attack. Thus menaced, the noble and hitherto quiet animal began to awaken its dormant energies, and to clothe itself in its terrors ; its mane shook, its eyes glared, and a low angry growl seemed to anticipate an outbursting of fury that might be fatal to all within its reach. Henry, who instantly marked its chafing mood, and foresaw the danger with which it was fraught, shouted loudly to Hodge, desiring him to call off the dog. This he had repeatedly attempted, but the eager animal would not obey his voice, and the consequences would probably have been of the most frightful nature, had not Hodge, by a heavy and well-directed stone, succeeded in laying the barking assailant stunned and sprawling upon the turf.

Meanwhile, the keeper had let down the wooden side of his caravan ; the lioness, who instantly saw and recognized her mate, made a loud whining noise, at which the lion turned sharply round, replied by a similar note of gra-

tulation, jumped from the bank, vaulted lightly over the intervening shrubs, and leaping back into his proper cage, the door of which had been invitingly left open for his reception, was secured without the smallest injury to any one.

It were needless to describe Henry's feelings at his sudden and safe extrication from a jeopardy so fearful. He himself neither stayed to analyze them, nor to thank Hodge for his bold and timely assistance, but rushed back to the spot where he had seen Emily sink fainting upon the turf. She was no longer visible. He ran to the Poacher's Lawn, where the dinner-table, with the fragments of the collation, remained *in statu quo*, but neither guests nor attendants were to be seen. As the light cart had also disappeared, he concluded that it had been used to convey the fugitives to the Fighting Cocks, as the nearest place of safety. Thither he accordingly proceeded, when he learnt from Tony that Squire Ringwood, having run back and thrown Miss Welbeck over his shoulder, a job which belonged by rights to Captain Frampton, who had charge of her, but which he had thought proper to decline, the

ladies had been huddled into the cart, and the whole party had quickly found their way to the inn. He added, that they were then up-stairs, endeavouring to recover from their alarm, though some of the females, especially Miss Welbeck, still remained exceedingly ill from the effects of terror.

Much as he wished to relieve the apprehension of the latter, Henry's pride would not allow him to obtrude himself upon the others, and he therefore sent a polite message by Tony, informing the company that he himself was safe and uninjured, that the lion had been secured in its caravan, that they might therefore return home, whenever it suited them, in perfect security, and that he trusted the ladies would dismiss every feeling of alarm, and experience no farther ill-effects from the agitation they had undergone. At the instance of Tony, he took some refreshment, of which after all his exertions he stood in no small need, and then striking across the country, made his way back to the George at Thaxted.

His disordered and heated appearance, for his bodily exertions and perturbation of mind

had thrown him into a profuse perspiration, together with the defiled state of his clothes, on which the lion had left the marks of his muddy paws, soon revealed to Mrs. Tenby that something extraordinary had happened, and she had no sooner learnt the particulars of Henry's escape, than lifting up her hands and eyes with an amazement that even predominated over her anger, she exclaimed, "The old one! Surely, surely you must be poking fun at me! What! you don't mean to say that you dropped from the tree on purpose, and gave yourself up to a great, savage, teejus crittur, that could have scalped you, and turned you inside out in half a minute! Well, that beats all natur! And what for? Why, for your worst enemies, every one of whom has been vilifying and telling lies of you, and running you down, as if you were a Mohawk or a Nigger. Did you ever think of that?"

"I thought of nothing: I acted upon the impulse of the moment; but if I had had time to reflect, it would not have made the smallest difference in my conduct, for I know not a pleasanter way of destroying my enemies than by

turning them into friends. Besides, Ringwood and Emily Welbeck were of the party."

"And what are they? what can they ever be to you? Guess your own skin is nearer to you than another man's jacket. You're talking 'tarnal nonsense, Henry, 'twouldn't be you if 'tw'ant, and you act for all the world just like an addle-headed gump. My poor, dear, brave boy!" continued Mrs. Tenby, laying her hand upon his shoulder, as her wrath gave way to a feeling of compassionate contempt, "You're not fit to go alone; you ain't, indeed: for as if 'twere not enough to let others bamboozle you, you make a cat's-paw of your own self. Come, boy, change your coat, and let's get a snack o' dinner, for you must be pretty considerably famished, I reckon."

CHAPTER VI.

It was the observation of a great philosopher, that the moment the world should see a perfect police, the moment there should be no contraband trade, that moment it would become quite impossible to write a good romance, for that then nothing would occur in real life which might, with any moderate degree of ornament, be formed into the ground-work of a fiction.

SCHLEGEL'S LECTURES.

HENRY'S intrepid conduct in this affair, which was largely bruited abroad by Hodge Nettletop, not without several marvellous additament, and widely circulated by Ringwood and Fanny Frampton, with a stricter attention to veracity, though with a not less ardent admiration, occasioned a considerable change of public opinion in the vicinity of Thaxted, especially when contrasted with Captain

Frampton's ungallant desertion of Emily in the hour of danger, and his refusal to return and extricate her from the perilous predicament in which she had been left. It was now equally obvious that Henry possessed an undaunted, a romantic courage, when any fitting occasion called for its display ; and that the Captain, however he might screw himself up to that conventional valour which springs from the fear of being thought a coward, had no stock of natural intrepidity to answer the call of any sudden and startling emergency. His former misbehaviour to Lucy, combined with his want of proper spirit and gallantry upon the present occasion, rendered him so exceedingly unpopular with the commonalty, that he was exposed to many taunts and annoyances ; while, as his character sunk in public estimation, that of Henry, finding more numerous and earnest defenders, became every day cleared from some of the unmerited obloquies that had been cast upon it. He himself, in the mean time, pursued the even tenour of his way, content with the consciousness of his own innocence,

and only solicitous, through good or ill-report, to benefit his fellow-creatures in every possible manner that his limited means would allow.

Such, however, was his unlucky fate, that this gleam of returning popularity was destined to be obscured by an occurrence in which, though again free from blame, he was a second time exposed to the vilifying charges of his maligners. It will be recollected that Mrs. Penguin, previously to the shameless declaration of her passion, had prevailed upon him to become security for one whom she had represented as a relation, suffering under temporary embarrassment. This she had done, not only to secure beforehand a means of revenge upon Henry, should he reject her overtures, as she had some reason to anticipate, but to effect the liberation of the paramour who had first seduced her from the paths of virtue, and who was at that moment lying in prison for debt. It was for this man, and not for any relation, as she pretended, that she had devised her insidious scheme, which had so far answered, that her friend had been set free, and her enemy, for such she now considered Henry, was destined, if she could succeed in

her machinations, to supply his place within the walls of a prison. An application had been made to him for payment of the bond, his immediate inability to discharge which he had frankly stated, and referred the parties to Mrs. Penguin, writing to that lady to remind her of the pledge she had given at the time of his contracting the obligation. So far from attending to this appeal, she revived the story of Henry's independent circumstances, which had first induced the creditor to accept his security, urging the prompt enforcement of the bond as a certain means of obtaining the money. Acting upon these instances and misrepresentations, the claimant gave orders for his immediate arrest, which was publicly executed by two bailiffs at the George Inn, a few days after the adventure in the Forest, and during the temporary absence of Mrs. Tenby.

The officers having business to transact at Lyndhurst, offered to convey their prisoner thither in a chaise-cart, or on foot, which ever he might prefer. As he invariably chose to walk, whenever an option was afforded him, he decided for that mode of proceeding, and

accordingly quitted Thaxted in the custody of the bailiffs, leaving several groups of its inhabitants and their gossiping neighbours earnestly discussing this strange occurrence, and most of them prepared—so soon do we think harshly of the unfortunate—to renounce their recent and favourable opinions of Henry, and to recall and credit the rumours of his being a needy fortune-hunter and adventurer. The prisoner, in the meanwhile, went forward at a brisk pace with his companions, vexed at Mrs. Penguin's ungenerous conduct, rather than dismayed at his own misfortune, and endeavouring to prove, by logical deduction, the folly of expecting that a man immured in a prison should be better enabled to discharge a debt, than when, by enjoying his liberty, he has the means of exerting his talents, of collecting his resources, and of consulting his friends. These arguments produced very little effect upon his auditors, who being perfectly satisfied with the present state of the law, did not think it necessary to enter more learnedly into the discussion, than by the occasional interjection of the words, "Blarney!" and "Gammon!"

In this manner they proceeded until they reached a heathy common in the vicinity of Brackenhurst, when they perceived a whiskey approaching with two men, being the only travellers they had yet encountered. Not having any reason to be particularly proud of the fellows with whom he was trudging arm-in-arm, and whose looks and dress, as well as their formidable bludgeons, sufficiently attested their occupation, Henry, with a natural feeling of shame, averted his face as the chaise approached; but he was recognised, notwithstanding, by the Captain of the smugglers, and his friend Rough-and-ready, who were riding within it. The former happening to know one of the bailiffs by sight, immediately perceived, by their order of march, that they were conveying Henry as their prisoner to some place of security, and instantly determined to effect his rescue. From his natural antipathy to land-sharks and pirates he would willingly have lent a hand to liberate even a stranger from their clutches; but when he saw within their grasp the man who had saved the life of his daughter and of his comrade George, a deep feeling of gratitude aggravated his hatred of the

officers into a sudden and ungovernable fury. Generally speaking, he was not liable to any access of passion, not prone to unnecessary violence ; considering his lawless calling, he might, indeed, be pronounced a peaceable man ; but in the present instance he could lay little claim, either by his actions or appearance, to any such character. His inflamed visage, his large compressed mouth, his sparkling, lion-like eyes, and the firm resolution which braced every muscle of his broad athletic frame, imparted something terrible to his appearance, as he threw aside his meerschaum-pipe, grasped a cudgel as if he would crush it in his hand, and leaping out of the chaise, called upon Rough-and-ready to follow him, shouting out to the officers as he approached, ‘ Avast ! heave off ! shoot a-head ! ’bout ship and luff ! ye lubberly sharks ! Start my timbers ! d’ye think I ’ll stand by and see young Mr. Melcomb grappled and carried into limbo while I ’ve a leg or an arm left ? Cast off your towing-rope and scud, for if ye let me once run ye aboard, curse me if I shall show ye much quarter ! ’”

The bailiffs, who were able-bodied and stout-

hearted men, too much accustomed to brawls and skirmishes to be easily intimidated, brandished their heavy bludgeons, swearing that they would never surrender their prisoner, and denouncing the pains and penalties of the law against those who should violently attempt a rescue. Henry, too, implored his friends to desist from their rash design; but the Captain and his sturdy companion, who were in no cue for listening to dissuasions, or attending to anything but the impulse of their feelings, instantly commenced a furious assault; the officers defended themselves with great resolution, and Henry, instead of attending to the Captain's shouts, that he should make his escape, now that the pirates had relinquished their hold of him, threw himself between the combatants with the hope of parting them. In this friendly but most perilous office he received an unintended blow from one of the bailiffs, which prostrated him upon the ground in a state of temporary insensibility. His assailant was himself felled to the earth immediately afterwards; his comrade, seeing that he had no chance of final success against such desperate antagonists, took to his

heels ; the Captain, assisted by his brother smuggler, lifted Henry into the whiskey, jumped in after him, whistled to the black mare, which set off instantly at a full gallop, and thus, in an incredibly short space of time from the commencement of this most unexpected affair, was Henry, in spite of himself, forcibly rescued, and conveyed to the Grange-farm, the haunt of the smugglers, with which our readers are already well acquainted.

As we have, however, been so long separated from its inmates, we must cast a brief retrospective glance at their proceedings, before we continue our narrative. In the last conversation we recorded between Gentleman George, as the smugglers called him, and Mary Boulderson, the former had avowed his determination of quitting the free-trade for ever, of immediately leaving the Grange-farm, notwithstanding his broken leg, and of taking up his abode in a sequestered cottage of the Forest. This resolution he communicated to the Captain on the following morning, expressing a hope that he himself would so far consult the happiness of

his daughter, as to abandon a mode of life to which she was so vehemently opposed.

“Opposed!” exclaimed the Captain; “more fool she! Haven’t I made a comfortable, honest fortun by it, and won’t she have every shilling? Leave it off! Well, so I will leave it off, and unship rudder, when I’ve run the Longsplice’s cargo, but not afore;—cause why? —I’ve sworn to have that ashore, and I won’t tell a lie, no, not even for Polly! But why must you quit the Grange, and go and live in a wood-cutter’s cabin in the forest, for all the world just like Robinson Crusoe? Lookye here, George; I don’t pretend to see into a mill-stone farther than other folks, but I’ve taken a notion into my head that you’ve got a sneaking kindness for my Polly, and if I can read any thing of the compass, and baint strangely out in my reckoning, she’d have no objection to be spliced to you. Now, mayhap you may be thinking, that ’cause I’ve got my lockers pretty well stored, I’m looking higher for Polly—for some one that was never in the free-trade, and has always been what the

world calls a respectable chap—but I tell you what, George, if you think any thing of that sort, you think a lie.”

“Whatever may have been my wishes,” said George, much agitated, “I have never dared to express any thoughts that way; I have never—”

“Clew up your jawing-tackle, and listen to me,” interposed the Captain. “I never asked you where you came from, nor who you are;—’cause why?—I know *what* you are. Know that you are a brave, generous fellow; and got that ’ere bit o’ lead put in you, when by good right I ought to have it! Dare say you’ve had misfortuns, but there’s many a good ship runs out of the right course at first, and yet comes safe into port at last. However, I hate palavering, and so to come to the upshot, if you like Polly, and Polly likes you, which according to my reckoning is a pretty sure card, why take her, George, take her; and as good and as brave-hearted a girl she is as any in all Hampshire, though she’s no better than the daughter of Lawrence Boulderson. I ar’n’t ashamed of my right name, you see, though they may call

me by half-a-dozen others, Lion, and Blacklocks, and the Capt'n, and what not;—but mind, I don't ask you what yours is."

George was about to speak, when his companion, lifting up his hand, continued, "Avast! batten-down your mouth-hatch, and hear me out, for I ha'n't done yet. If we both quit the free-trade, a'ter we've run the Longsplice, and you marry my Polly, I've got quite enough to take care of us all till you can get into some other birth, if you don't like to be idle: and when I'm popped under ground in my last hammock, there'll be plenty to victual you and yours for the whole voyage of life; for I've got nobody to care for but Polly and you, and every shilling shall go into your lockers."

This prospect of a happiness which he at once ardently desired, and feared to be unattainable, as well as the generous nature of the proposition, so deeply affected George's spirit, softened as it was by long anxiety and personal suffering, that in the attempt to speak he burst into tears, and could only express his emotion by repeatedly grasping the Captain's hand. Apologising for this weakness, which he attri-

buted to his reduced state, he declared, that to explain the circumstances which made it impossible for him to accept this gratifying offer, he must divulge the secret of who and what he was ; a secret which he could no longer withhold from so sincere and generous a friend, though, as it deeply involved his own personal safety, as well as that of another, he had hitherto kept it locked in his own bosom, and must even now exact a pledge that it should never be repeated. This being willingly given, George continued—"As so few of our brotherhood pass by their real names, you will be little surprised to hear that mine is not George, though you can hardly be prepared for the strange avowal that my real appellation is Godfrey Welbeck, and that I am the only son of Gideon Welbeck of the Manor-house,—that son of whose vices, follies, and crimes, you have doubtless heard; that unfortunate son who has been formally disinherited and cursed by his father ! Of my vices and follies I make a free confession; but, thank God ! I am not responsible for any crimes, unless my engaging in the free-trade may subject me to that imputation."

“Fudge!” interposed the Captain. “What crimes can we commit, since we touch no man’s property but the King’s, and never attack any one but the rascally preventive men?”

“The profligate companions,” resumed Godfrey, (for so we shall henceforward call him,) “who, in the belief that I was heir to a large fortune, hovered around me like so many harpies, and had engaged me in extensive bill transactions, no sooner found that my resources were utterly exhausted, than they trumped up a charge of forgery against me, well knowing it to be utterly unfounded, but hoping that my father would pay whatever they might choose to extort, rather than have his name dishonoured, and see his son exposed to so infamous an imputation. But they were baffled: my father would not be any farther plundered; and I have every reason to believe, by recent letters from my agent in London, that the villains, who actually procured a warrant for my apprehension upon this false charge of forgery, will be exposed to shame, convicted of perjury, and severely punished for their conspiracy.”

“Start my timbers! and was it for nothing

more than this that Justice Welbeck disinherited and cursed you, and turned you adrift?"

"Alas! my offences have been accumulating for years; but that which finally irritated him beyond all hope of reconciliation, and drove him to this dreadful anathema, was undoubtedly the charge of felony, coupled as it was with my degrading and most unfortunate marriage."

"Marriage! Whew!" whistled the Captain; "Are you married? Shiver the Longsplice! how came you to keep it such a secret? That war'n't fair and aboveboard, George: and now I think on't, didn't I hear something of your meeting a wench in the Forest? That was your wife, I s'pose."

"No, indeed, that was my sister, my dear and generous Emily, who, in spite of all my misdeeds, has still continued my friend and counsellor. I have often made appointments to meet her in the recesses of Boldre-wood Walk; but as she was threatened with the same rejection and malediction as myself if she ever maintained any correspondence with me, our interviews were of course kept a profound secret from all. She believes that I have been living

concealed in a distant cottage; for not even to Emily did I reveal the fact of my being engaged with you in the free-trade, lest I should be adding farther distress to a mind which was already too much oppressed with sorrow."

"Lord! is the girl so squeamish as all that? Well, and what put it in your head to come and join us, and never to say a word about your being spliced?"

Godfrey here detailed how an abandoned woman had been palmed off upon him as a person of respectability, and related the misery she had quickly entailed upon him in various ways; to escape from which, from his own debts as well as hers, and from the threatened criminal indictment, he had, in a moment of desperation, quitted London, and joined the Captain, not only for the purpose of being near Emily, his only remaining friend, but from his persuasion that some of the numerous places of concealment known to the smugglers, would afford him a secure retreat, until, by the mediation of his sister, he might effect some arrangement of his affairs. All this was perfectly true, but not the whole truth. Had the narrator been conversant

with his own character, he might have added, that notwithstanding his acquirements, he was of weak and pliable mind, prone to act upon impulse, habitually indiscreet and unreflecting, not without a certain dash of romance, or rather of wildness in his temperament. Upon a former occasion he had seen and admired Mary, and the hope of being beneath the same roof with her had exercised no inconsiderable influence upon his decision. With his usual levity of mind he had never reflected to what this intimacy might lead, had never considered the folly, the unjustifiableness of kindling a reciprocal attachment, which, in his present circumstances, could not be brought to any satisfactory result. Hence his embarrassment, his remorse, his vacillation, his inconsistency, his mysterious language and conduct, when he found that this mutual regard had actually been engendered, and yet wanted resolution to explain the dilemma in which he was placed, or to withdraw himself from its influence. The fear of compromising Emily with her father, by any disclosure of their interviews, prevented him from satisfying Mary as to the suspicious

meeting in the Forest; while he dreaded to make the confession of his marriage, lest she should attach herself to some other, and thus destroy all hope of his ever possessing the object of his affections.

That there was such a hope, and that too neither a remote nor an unreasonable one, he now stated to the Captain, since he had ascertained that the woman had been married to him under a false name, and had discovered other informalities in their hasty nuptials. His proctor assured him that he would be successful in the dissolution of marriage for which he was then suing, in which event Godfrey declared, that if the Captain retained his generous purposes after hearing his unfortunate story, nothing would delight him more than to accept his offer, and to dedicate the remainder of his life to the happiness of Mary, trusting, as he did, that the bitter experience he had earned would henceforward secure him from all recurrence of his past follies and misdeeds.

“Stick to what I said?” cried the Captain in a somewhat indignant tone; “to be sure I will,—when did you ever know Larry Boulder-

son tell a lie? There's my fist, George, and that's as good as e'er a bond in all Europe. As to your running among the shoals and breakers, and having your rudder unshipped, and your sheathing beat off, why that may happen to any young pilot that doesn't keep a sharp look out; but he must be a precious lubber indeed, if he runs his boat a second time upon the same reef. But I say, George, if you cut clear of this spit-fire rover that is grappled to your side, and marry my Polly, mayhap the old justice mayn't like your second wife any more than he did the first?"

"I would omit no means of being reconciled to my father, but I know that it is utterly hopeless. He is a stern, inexorable man, and where he has once conceived a disgust it is not only immovable but inveterate. I believe that the mere sight of me, dearly as he once loved me, would now almost irritate him to madness. I cannot complain, I am rightly punished for my follies; I am disgraced, a pauper, and fatherless."

"Start my timbers, George! what cursed nonsense you're talking. If you trounce these

sharks in London, and cut clear of your brimstone fire-ship of a wife, you're not disgraced. A pauper you shall never be while I've got a shot in the locker ; and if you and Polly come together, you shall have Larry Boulderson for your father ; so you see, you're three whole points wrong in your reckoning. Avast now ! will ye ? What are you thanking me for, when it's I that ought to thank you for coming more than once into fire to cover my carcase ? I never did thank you, though—'cause why ?—I hate jawing and snivelling, and all that sort of thing ; so cheer up, George, toss off this cordial, and let's talk no more now, for I see it only makes you pipe your eye, which is all Betty Martin."

After this conversation the Captain no longer opposed Godfrey's immediate departure from the Grange-farm, conscious that upon Mary's account, as well as his own, it was much better they should be separated until the result of the pending suit should be ascertained. It was agreed to leave Mary under the impression that their separation was a final one, in order that she might thus be gradually weaning herself

from an attachment, which a failure in gaining his cause would ultimately compel her to conquer; and for the same reason no intimation was given her of Godfrey's real history. From time to time, the Captain went over to his retreat in the Forest, to afford him society, to attend to his recovery, to consult with him, and to supply the means for prosecuting his suits in London, both of which presented every appearance of a successful issue. Mary, in the meanwhile, was a prey to feelings which she would not confess, but which sufficiently betrayed themselves in her altered looks. Her proud and honourable spirit prompted her to scorn the equivocating conduct of the man who could lay himself out to gain her affections, for such was her construction of George's behaviour, and who, at the same time, by his unexplained meeting in the Forest, appeared to be engaged in a love affair with some other woman; while the mystery which involved his name and his fate, at once stimulated her curiosity, and added to her regret that he should have withdrawn himself without coming to an *éclaircissement*. That he was really attached to her she could hardly

doubt, but this only rendering his indecision and ambiguity the more unmanly, she spoke of him at times with the bitterness and scorn which such conduct might well seem to warrant. Not even the wounded pride, however, which prompted these animadversions, could expel him from her heart, and the conflict of her feelings was, as we have already intimated, sufficiently apparent in her saddened looks.

Such was the state of affairs at the Grange-farm, when Henry, still insensible from the dreadful contusion he had received upon the head, was lifted out of the whiskey, and carried into the house. As there was too much reason to apprehend that an immediate hue and cry would be raised, and search-warrants be issued, the Captain thought it prudent to convey him at once into their secret store, a place of security which had hitherto baffled every attempt to discover it. There was a spare kitchen in the farm, the grate of which, with the whole iron back of the chimney, being made to turn upon a pivot, afforded an entrance to the ancient vaults, which had probably been excavated in the monkish times. When a visit was

expected, this fire was always lighted, and the cook went busily to work, so that it was impossible to suspect that the grate was applied to any other than culinary purposes; nor, had a doubt been engendered, would the heat and the smoke have allowed any very strict scrutiny.

It would be difficult to describe Henry's surprise, when, upon recovering his faculties, he found himself lying on a couch, in a large vault, dimly lighted with candles, and confusedly lumbered with tubs and dry goods, and stores of all sorts, while Mary was applying an embrocation to the contusion on his head, the Captain looking earnestly on with his meerschaum-pipe in his mouth, and honest Rough-and-ready, not to lose time, employed himself in stowing away more compactly some of the multifarious contents of the place. It was Henry's first idea, as his recollection returned, that they were all in prison, and he was beginning to express a hope that his friends had not been incarcerated on account of their rash attempt to rescue him, when Mary, who hung over him with all the grateful tenderness which the memory of the service he had rendered to her at Hordle Cliff

was so well calculated to inspire, whispered to him that he was in safety at the Grange-farm, urging him at the same time not to speak, but to take the composing draught she had prepared, and then endeavour to sleep. An acute throbbing in the head, and a raging thirst, disposed him to obey both injunctions; when Mary, carefully covering him with a thick woollen cloak, again recommended him to seek repose, if he possibly could, and beckoning her companions away, left him to his meditations, or rather to his sufferings, for the pain of his wound was so intense that it would not even allow him to think, while sleep was entirely out of the question.

After some time, the Captain stole gently back into the vault, and seeing Henry's eyes still open, endeavoured to soften his stentorian voice, as he inquired, "Well, lad, what cheer! how goes it?"

In answer to which, Henry declared that his sufferings would not allow him to slumber at present.

"Ay, but you will in an hour or two," said his visitant; "and then you'll wake just as if

nothing had happened. That 's a rare mixture of Polly's ! I 've taken it scores of times, when I 've been capsized and flabbergasted, just as you are now. Don't like to leave you alone—'cause why?—you 'll get down in the mouth, so 'spose I sit and chat with ye a bit, just to cheer you up, till you drop off."

At that moment Henry would have preferred solitude and silence to any company in the world ; but he felt too ill, even to make objections, and the Captain, seating himself upon a sea-chest beside the couch, began to select for conversation such subjects as he thought likely to prove the most interesting to his auditor.

" Tell ye the worst broken head ever *I* got. I and two others were nabbed running a light crop at Selsea Bill—clapped up in limbo—had afore a big wig—penalty hundred pounds, hadn't got it then—'cause why?—it was many years ago, and I only a beginner ; so I was sentenced to go on board a King's ship, as a common sailor. Sent to the Tender at Spithead, and stowed away down in the hold. Pitch dark night—port-hole left open—'cause why?—summer time, you see, and as hot as the devil ! So I cut up my

jacket into slips, climbed up to the port-hole, and let myself down by the slips which I had tied together. They weren't long enough, so I was obliged to make a splash as I came to the water; night-watch heard me, though they couldn't see me. Bang! bang! whiz! whiz! go the poppers. A miss is as good as a mile—so I swam away as hard as I could pull, when all of a sudden, just as I had caught the tide, and was swimming on my back, I came slap against a buoy. Start my timbers! I thought my whole skull was stove in and bulged. However, I rested awhile upon the buoy, and then started away afresh, and though I could hardly see, 'cause of the blood running into my eyes, I got ashore, and found my way to some of our free-traders, at Gosport. Lord! how they did stare to see me half naked and covered with blood! and they knowing it was only the day afore that I was limboed aboard the tender! So they dressed me up instantly like a gentleman swell, clapped a wig over the plaister they had put upon my broken head, I walked two or three miles along the road, that they might not trace me at the offices, was taken up by the London

coach, and that ere same night I slept at Red-riffe. True as ever I'm sitting here; only ask Rough-and-ready else, for he was one of them that helped to dress me up. And that was the worst broken head ever *I* had."

Here the Captain paused, as if expecting that his auditor would make some observation upon what he had heard, but as Henry remained silent, he resumed, "Hadn't got my pocket so well lined then as I have now; but, Lord! I ain't half so rich as I ought to be. If I had only the hundredth part of the guineas I've carried across for the merchants—for they always had a confidence in honest old Lion, as they called me; or if I had succeeded with all the crops I've run upon my own account, I might ride in my coach and eight. However, I mustn't complain. You go upon e'er a change from Hamburg to Bilboa, and ask the merchants, either Jack Frog or Mynheer Big-breeches, whether they know Lion Boulderson or not, and what they'll trust him for, that's all. And haven't I stood five-and-twenty years' racket for it all; been chequered and capiased, and prisoned, and sent on board King's ships, and

what not? I was three whole months once in a back room at Chichester upon the skulk, and never took my eye off the latch, except when I was asleep. Black Bess all the time ready saddled and bridled, in a stable that had two doors, opening into different streets, so that come which way they would, I must have had ten minutes start, and that's enough upon *her* back. I'd a lucky little lugger at that time, called the 'Ax about!' Lord! Lord! what fun I've had in that'ere little lugger. Many a time there comes up a reveny or gover'ment cutter, 'Lugger, ahoy!' says they, 'what's your name?' 'Ax about!' says we. Start my timbers! what a passion I've seen 'em in when I gave 'em this answer three times over, and I and Rough-and-ready laughing all the while fit to split our sides. Well, I was going to tell you, this here lugger had false ceiling and a false kelson, behind which we had stowed away a parcel of French clocks and thingabobs. So I run her smack up the river, and off Gravesend they pops me a custom-house officer on board. Didn't care, knew he would never find out our trap; no more he wouldn't, only one of the concealed musical

clocks, that had been wound up by some damned fool or other, began to sing out, ‘Ting, ting, a ring, ting!’ behind the false ceiling. Curse your French jabber! says I, wish I had the smashing of your chattering jaws! So the officer seized the lugger, you may be sure; but I was up to him, for I spiced his beer so rarely, that he dropped asleep, fast as a church, and afore he woke we had cleared out, and got ashore all our clocks and rattletaps. It’s true as ever I’m sitting here this very minute; you go and ask Rough-and-ready else.”

Although the Captain had at first made his voice as *piano* as its nature would admit, it had gradually grown louder, as he became warmed with his subject, until it finally reached its customary stentorian pitch. At this juncture Henry became impatient of such a noisy infliction, declared that he began to feel drowsy, and wished to be left alone, a request which his rough and loud, but well-meaning friend, immediately obeyed by withdrawing from the vault. In a little time after his departure, the composing draught began to exercise its soothing

influence upon the patient, who ultimately forgot in welcome sleep the sufferings occasioned by his wound, and all the disagreeable thoughts to which his strange adventure had given rise.

CHAPTER VII.

Was it possible for me to be indulged in a perpetual intercourse with two such objects as Fanny and her sister, and not find my heart led by insensible attraction towards her?

THE CLANDESTINE MARRIAGE.

THE bailiffs, one of whom was severely hurt in the sudden fray with the smugglers, having betaken themselves to a public-house not far from the scene of action, obtained a conveyance to the Manor-house, where they made a deposition before Justice Welbeck of all that had occurred, and procured warrants to be issued for the apprehension of the individuals concerned in the assault and rescue. Although their statements did not directly tend to inculpate Henry, it was concluded, of course, that

the parties implicated were his friends and confederates ; and it was quickly rumoured through the neighbourhood that the Yankee adventurer, after having nearly killed one of the sheriff's officers, had absconded from Hampshire, which would now, probably, be freed for ever from the presence of such an unprincipled and lawless desperado. Even those who had begun to uphold him since his encounter with the lion, were obliged to yield to this overwhelming evidence of his dangerous character, for most of them took the exaggerated reports upon trust ; so that, with the exception of Frank Ringwood, his staunch adherent, who still refused to condemn him until he had heard his defence,—of Fanny Frampton, who shared Ringwood's opinions, and avowed them with a petulant vivacity,—and of the timid Emily Welbeck, who, fully absolving him from all blame in the transaction, was almost overwhelmed with the fresh misfortunes that had befallen him, and yet feared to give utterance to her sentiments;—with these exceptions among the gentry, and the small, but zealous faction of Hodge Nettletop

among the lower class, there were few indeed who had courage to stand up in defence of the traduced and unfortunate Henry Melcomb.

Incensed, on several accounts, at his escape, the malignant Mrs. Penguin determined to turn the occurrence as much as possible to his disadvantage. With this view, she perverted all the circumstances, and ran about from house to house, circulating her slanders with an incredible industry and volubility. At Oakham-hall, however, which she visited in her charitable round, she found the inmates too deeply absorbed in their own troubles to listen to her scandal, or even to see her. Never had that sumptuous edifice been the scene of so much wrath, amazement, and heart-burning, as at the present moment. We have stated that Lord Mossdale had been perverse and intractable enough to dislike Miss Frampton, in exact proportion to the insidious manœuvring with which Lady Susan, not unassisted by the young lady herself, had studied to entrap him into a marriage; and that he began to affect Fanny, not only in spite of, but rather in consequence of her being undervalued, and

slightingly regarded by the rest of the family. Fanny was the first pretty girl who had treated him with perfect *nonchalance*, sometimes even with ridicule, not seldom with total neglect, always repelling his advances, and laughing at his protestations. Like most rich young noblemen, Lord Mossdale was a will-pampered man, hating to be balked in any object of his capricious fancy, and coveting with the more avidity that which seemed to withdraw itself from his grasp. His pride was piqued, and he determined not to be thwarted in his desires. There would, besides, be an *éclat* in proving to the world that he was not to be cajoled by Lady Susan ; it would evince penetration to detect the designs of the fair and fascinating "Tuft-hunter;" it would establish his acuteness, his power of thinking and acting for himself, that he should select for his wife the girl whom nobody recommended to his attentions; and finally, it would gratify his own feelings to supplant Ringwood, who had presumed to cross his path, and whom he began to contemplate with as much jealousy as was compatible with his own supine and

careless character, which was not liable to deep impressions of any sort.

Here were abundant weighty motives, it must be confessed, for such a trifling affair as an offer of marriage ; and as Lord Mossdale, from a confidence of success in every thing he said or did, was habitually prompt and plain spoken, he sought out Fanny forthwith, and made her a formal tender of his hand, fortune, and title.

“Your Lordship does me great honour,” said Fanny, “but it is scarcely half an hour since I agreed to accept Mr. Ringwood.”

“Oh ! that need not make the smallest difference. Ladies are allowed to change their minds, especially in affairs of this sort, when so much better an offer presents itself ; and I flatter myself that you can hardly balance long between Farmer Ringwood - and Lord Mossdale.”

“Dear, no ! not a minute, not a moment, my Lord,” cried Fanny, curtsying with an arch expression, which her suitor immediately construed in his own favour.

“Then I may presume that my rustic rival

will receive his dismissal," said the Peer, bowing very graciously in return for the curtsey.

"Nay, my Lord, there you presume too far. I said I would not hesitate a moment in deciding, and you must therefore allow me to say, with many thanks for your favourable opinion, that I decline the honour of receiving your Lordship as my lover, and shall never acknowledge any one in that capacity but Mr. Ringwood."

"You cannot surely be serious."

"Why, they tell me I am never serious, but if I know anything of my own heart, I am now, perhaps for the first time in my life, gravely, firmly, unalterably decided in the election I have made!"

"Have you consulted Lady Susan, or your father?"

"No indeed, my Lord! I consulted nothing but my own heart, which I apprehend to be the best judge, because it is to be made happy or miserable by the verdict itself has to pronounce. My father would recommend me to marry for money, Lady Susan for pedigree.

In you, my Lord, both are united, and you will therefore, of course, command the suffrages of my parents ; a circumstance which only makes me the more regret that you can never hope to obtain mine ; but I have the consolation of knowing, that in marrying Ringwood, I shall, in one respect at least, make a most appropriate match."

"In what respect, may I venture to inquire?"

"Why, my Lord, they all tell me I am a silly girl, and it is therefore quite characteristic and fitting, you know, that I should make a silly marriage."

"Egad ! I begin to think that they are not so much out in their notions of you," muttered Lord Mossdale. "Then I am distinctly to understand that you reject me in favour of Farmer Ringwood?"

"In favour of Squire Ringwood, with your Lordship's permission, and thus modified, I beg you to consider my decision as not only positive, but irrevocable."—Fanny curtsied and left the room, while her rejected suitor, turning upon his heel, exclaimed, "That girl is

a fool, after all, I see, and as stubborn as a mule, so that there will be no use in speaking to Frampton or Ludy Susan. I shall bolt from Oakham-hall ; it was getting quite a bore, and this affair will make it a regular nuisance." Humming an opera song, as if to conceal his mortification even from himself, he went to his apartment, wrote a letter to his host to say that sudden business called him to London, ordered his horses, and having instructed his valet where to meet him, Lord Mossdale turned his back upon Oakham-hall ; his pride, which was severely hurt, because it had never before been subjected to the smallest wound, not allowing him to take leave of his friends, or to run the risk of encountering his successful rival.

Great, indeed, was the surprise and disappointment of Lady Susan, her husband, and her eldest daughter, when, on their return home from a morning's airing in the carriage, they found his Lordship's letter on the table, and learnt that he had actually quitted the Hall. Conjectures rapidly succeeded each other, and the parties, in their endeavours to account for this abrupt flight, " still found no end in wan-

dering mazes lost," until Fanny, upon entering the drawing-room, and learning the subject of the enigma to which they were vainly endeavouring to furnish solutions, suddenly clapped her hands together, exclaiming, "Lud! I declare I shouldn't be surprised if the silly man had run away from the Hall for no other reason in the world than because I refused to have him!"

"Refused to have him!" ejaculated Lady Susan and her husband in the same breath; "to have him for what?"

"Only for a husband! Did you ever hear any thing so ridiculous?" said Fanny laughing.

"Well, I am utterly lost in amazement!" exclaimed Lady Susan, who was so astounded at the offer and the alleged rejection, that her faculties were for the moment partially bewildered.

"I am surprised at nothing Lord Mossdale does," cried Miss Frampton, with a disdainful toss; "for he is a remarkably weak-headed young man, almost an idiot; and, for my part, I think we are lucky to be rid of him, though, I must say, his manner of sneaking from the

Hall is the most pitiful and ungentlemanlike conduct I ever heard of." And she hurried out of the room, lest the vexation, which she was endeavouring to conceal beneath an affected indifference, should become too vehement to be suppressed.

"But child, child!" cried Mr. Frampton; "you do not mean really and positively to assert that you declined my Lord Mossdale for a husband?"

"I did, indeed, Sir; and I rejected him for the best of all possible reasons—because I had just agreed to marry Mr. Ringwood."

"What! marry Ringwood, *Farmer* Ringwood! a pauper! a beggar! the girl must be stark, staring mad," exclaimed Lady Susan.

"Harkee, Fanny, if you marry this pennyless fellow, I will never give you a single shilling of portion," said the father. "I am quite surprised at the fellow's assurance in aspiring to the daughter of a man of my consequence, a magistrate of the county, and one of the Verderers of his Majesty's Forest!—I won't give him a shilling."

"That is precisely what I said to Mr. Ring-

wood," said Fanny ; " I told him that if I were to marry a rich man, I believed I might expect a portion ; but that if I united myself to a poor one, I feared you would give me nothing : though to me it would seem much more rational, were you exactly to reverse the process. Mr. Ringwood declared that he was perfectly indifferent upon this point ; that he had quite wealth enough, because he was content ; and that the richest and wisest man was he who had the fewest wants, not he who had the most money."

At this daring impeachment of the all-sufficiency of wealth, Frampton fumed, and loudly apostrophised his daughter : Lady Susan, whose suspended faculties had by this time recovered themselves, stormed outright ; both loudly declared that they would never give their consent to any such degrading match ; and both angrily demanded of Fanny how she had dared, either to accept Ringwood, or reject Lord Mossdale, without consulting them. " That, by settling the matter at once, we might all of us be spared the pain of more than one such altercation as this," said Fanny, firmly but respectfully. " I

knew beforehand that we should never agree, and that our irreconcilable differences of opinion would only be aggravated by discussion. The affair is now definitively settled; spare me then, I beseech you, any farther reproaches, and let my future conduct convince you, that if, in seeking my own happiness, I presume to act upon my own judgment, my compulsory disobedience does not spring from any want of filial affection, from any oblivion of filial duty."

Menaces, expostulations, and even entreaties, were alternately used to induce her to give up Ringwood, but all proved equally unavailing. An honest man's love had suddenly transformed the young, playful, and volatile girl, into a staunch, resolute, unflinching assertor of her own right to decide upon the best means of securing her own happiness. Her mood of sportiveness and levity was gone; she listened, indeed, with evident sorrow; no taunts or threatenings provoked her to recriminate upon her parents; she was deferential, patient, almost humble in her voice, look, and demeanour; but in the resolution she had formed, not lightly, but upon principle and consideration,

no martyr could be more steadfast and immovable. "It is what I always told you," cried Lady Susan to her husband; "she is not merely an oddity, a simpleton, of whom I predicted from the first that nothing could be made, but an obstinate, self-willed, wrong-headed, stubborn little wretch, and we have no alternative left but to abandon her to the misery which she so rebelliously persists in bringing upon her own head."

Leaving the inhabitants of Oakham-hall to digest this most unpalatable occurrence as best they might, we must remove the scene to Grotto-house, where Henry's rescue from the bailiffs had a material influence in producing, or rather in accelerating an event, with which, at the first blush, it would appear to have very little connexion. At the time that the rumours of his independent circumstances were current, Mrs. Penguin had easily persuaded the creditor of her imprisoned paramour to take his name as a security, and to liberate the original debtor. But having now good reason to believe that she had deceived and imposed upon him for her own insidious purposes, the man, upon

discovering Henry's poverty, threatened again to arrest his former prisoner, whom he had not legally exonerated from his responsibility. This state of affairs induced Mrs. Penguin to weigh the propriety of expediting a design which she had long had in contemplation. It has been already intimated, that the sole motive of her pretended affection and hypocritical anxiety about her husband's health was the hope of influencing his testamentary dispositions, and succeeding to his whole fortune. He was many years older than herself, she considered him a bad life, and she would not willingly forfeit a chance which was so important in amount, and might not be by any means remote in its occurrence. However, there was no use in throwing away her time and her attentions upon a man whom she thoroughly despised, unless she were certain of benefiting herself by the sacrifice; and the juncture now appeared to her to have arrived when it was desirable to place this matter beyond all possibility of doubt.

One morning, accordingly, when her husband was absent upon his geological pursuits, she

opened his escrutoire with the key, which she had previously secured for that purpose, and proceeding to inspect his will, discovered, with mingled rage and surprise, that he had bequeathed the whole of his fortune to distant relatives, alleging that it was unnecessary to make any farther provision for his wife, than the two hundred pounds a year which were settled upon her at the time of their marriage. Arising from funded property, vested in the name of trustees, this income could not, as Mrs. Penguin well knew, be taken away from her. This important and not very satisfactory discovery soon brought her plans to a crisis. In a clandestine interview with her paramour, it was agreed that, in order to place him beyond the reach of a second arrest, she should elope from her husband, and accompany him in the first instance to Ireland, of which country he was a native. No time was lost in the execution of this purpose, and the astounded geologist, upon returning from one of his morning rambles, found his escrutoire open, his papers scattered about, the

will tossed upon the ground, the money taken from his secret drawer, and a letter lying upon the desk, of which the following is a copy, after correcting sundry errors of orthography.

“Is this your gratitude, you poor, paltry, ungenerous, mean-spirited, shabby fellow? Is this my reward for nursing you, watching over your health, and waiting upon you, early and late, which, considering that I always despised and abominated you, made my life worse than that of a galley-slave, or a West India blackamoor? Why do you think I married you, when you were old enough to be my father, and I couldn't then abide you, and never have done since, unless it was that by bamboozling you for a few years, I might come in for your money, and follow my own fancy with the man that I always loved? I shall do so now, with a part of your dirty money, for the two hundred a year you can't keep from me, and my friend has property of his own in Ireland, though he has been lately a little

embarrassed ; and, as he is a perfect gentleman, and not half your age, I have no doubt we shall be very happy together.

“ I have taken the plate with me, which I consider to be my own, being exchanged, as you well know it was, for what I brought you at our marriage ; and as I conclude you would hardly expect me to leave you without sixpence in my pocket, I have taken the trifle of notes and gold that were in the secret drawer. And so leaving you to your own conscience for your base, monstrous ingratitude, and hoping I shall never see your face again, I subscribe myself,

“ LAURA PENGUIN.”

Mrs. Penguin, at the time of her marriage, possessed half a dozen silver tea-spoons, and a pair of sugar-tongs, which the silversmith, when Penguin purchased two or three hundred pounds worth of new plate, took, and allowed for by weight, deducting the trifling amount from his bill. This the lady, by a beneficial calculation of her own, called an exchange, and had accordingly stripped Grotto-house, when she left it, of every silver article it contained.

Penguin's amazement at reading this letter was so extreme, that it was some time before it could find vent in the exclamation of "What a developement of character ! I thought, when I made this will, that I should draw her out finely—did it on purpose—suspected she would get a peep at it, but never dreamt it would bring my marriage to such a comfortable conclusion." Upon this occasion the customary additaments of "exemplary, admirable woman ! truly attached wife !" &c. &c. were suppressed ; though, indeed, there was no time for their utterance, the delighted geologist beginning immediately to snap his fingers, prance up and down the room, and whistle loudly and lustily at the thought of his being so cheaply freed from one who, having always been a domestic tyrant, although a specious and hypocritical one, had now proved herself in addition to be a loose and unprincipled wanton. His own mercantile experience had convinced him that it was sometimes advantageous to gain a loss, a dictum which he considered to have been never more forcibly illustrated than in the welcome deprivation he

had now sustained ; so far, therefore, from attempting to pursue the frail fugitive, he gave strict orders to the servants, should she again present herself at the gate, to deny her admission.

CHAPTER VIII.

Alas! no, he's in heaven! where am I now?
Yonder's the sea, and there's a ship; how 't tumbles!
And there's a rock lies watching under water,
Now, now it beats upon it, now, now, now,
There's a leak sprung, a sound one—how they cry!
Up with her 'fore the wind, you'll lose all else!
Good night, good night—you're gone!

THE TWO NOBLE KINSMEN.

IT was on the evening after this occurrence, that a stranger, arriving from London on the outside of the coach, got down at the Cricketers public-house, at the entrance of Thaxted, made his way into the tap-room, and called in an asthmatic, wheezing voice, for a rummer of hot brandy and water. Of low stature, and considerably past the meridian of life, his blue sailor trowsers, his coat and waistcoat of shabby black,

and his dirty white neckcloth, rendered it somewhat difficult to divine his calling; while his features, like his garments, were at once weather-beaten and indefinite. Their sunburnt patches indicated long residence in some southern clime, in spite of which superficial bronze upon the prominent parts of his face, there was elsewhere a blotchy and sodden ghastliness that betokened a constitution broken down by confirmed habits of intemperance. His loose flesh and his shrunken limbs showed that he had fallen away from a former state of robustness. Beneath his low brow, overhung by a shock of short bushy hair, were two deep-set grey eyes, so closely placed together as to resemble those of a four-footed animal, though they appeared to be fixed and dimmed by habitual sottishness. Sullenness and craft constituted his predominant expression, and yet the man seemed to be convivial in his habits, and even in his nature, drinking deeply, talking as freely as his husky voice would allow him, and not seldom indulging in a laugh, rendered peculiarly hideous by the ugliness of his mouth, and the ragged-discoloured appearance of his few remaining teeth.

His first inquiry when he arrived was, whether Gideon Welbeck were still alive and at the Manor-house, the affirmative answer to which evidently afforded him considerable satisfaction, though he could not conceal his amazement, when informed that the person about whom he was inquiring was a magistrate. "Gideon Welbeck a justice!" he exclaimed to himself several times, and then burst into a long laugh that seemed to be at once hearty and ironical, if such a combination can be imagined; at the conclusion of which he called for more brandy and water, and proceeded to make the most minute inquiries as to the family, fortune, and personal habits of the justice, as he now invariably termed him. The reported greatness of his wealth, magnified of course by Sam Tapps the landlord, with whom the stranger was conversing, filled him with manifest delight; and he more than once started up, exclaiming, "I'll see him to-night, I'll see him to-night;" though when a lad who was in the room offered to show him the way to the Manor-house, he sat down again, saying, "Thank ye, boy, thank ye; but I know the way to the Manor-house long afore

you were born or thought of." In this manner he continued making inquiries and tipping, as successive visitors dropped into the room, until at length, becoming thoroughly intoxicated, his brawling, turbulent nature began to disclose itself, first in quarrels and abusive language, and finally in his knocking down a by-stander who happened to make some observation that displeased him. A desperate scuffle ensued, and it was not until after he had wounded two or three of his assailants, that he was secured and conveyed to the cage, where he was locked up, and left to pass the night upon some clean straw, with many threats that he should be properly trounced in the morning for his outrageous conduct.

In execution of these menaces, Sam Tapps, who had himself received a black-eye in the onslaught, accompanied by two or three witnesses, whose bandaged heads intimated that they had not escaped quite so well as the landlord, and a couple of constables, wielding their emblems of authority, presented themselves at the cage, in order that they might convey their prisoner in due form before the magistrate.

Though he had slept off the effects of his intemperance, he had been too much accustomed to drunken brawls to betray the least compunction, or even emotion of any sort at the evidence of his overnight's violence; nay, he gave a complacent chuckle, as he contemplated the results of his pot-valour, simply observing in his croaking voice, "That's my way; when I get a cup too much I always show fight!" adding, in reply to one of the constables who stated they were about to carry him before Justice Welbeck, "So much the better, that's exactly what I came down here about. I have business to settle with the justice."

"And I trust his worship will settle your business," said one of the wounded men, "by sending you to prison for six months."

"Gideon Welbeck send *me* to prison!" cried the stranger, with a contemptuous smile—"Heh! heh! it's a devilish deal more likely that I should send him there." This insolent bravado, for such it sounded to the auditors, was attributed to the undissipated remains of his last night's debauch, and the whole party set forward for the Manor-house, manacles being

placed upon the prisoner's wrists, to prevent any recurrence of his former violence. During the walk he was perfectly collected and undismayed, attempting even at times a sort of coarse nautical humour, and amusing himself with imagining the sort of reception he should meet with from the justice, whom he familiarly termed his old friend and acquaintance. Provoked at his saucy demeanour, some of his companions assured him that his worship, who was a most rigid punisher of such drunken excesses, would soon bring him to his senses; but he only received these denunciations with a triumphant chuckling laugh, generally terminated by a fit of deep hollow coughing.

On their arrival at the Manor-house, they proceeded to the enclosure at the upper end of the great hall, which was screened round, and fitted up so as to resemble a small court of law. His worship, who had already been transacting some official business, was seated in his elevated arm-chair, old Wiverley, his clerk, was at a desk before him, Sam Tapps and his party were admitted within the screen, and the posse of villagers and other curious idlers who

had followed them from Thaxted, clustered around it on the outside.

Sam Tapps had already made some progress in the recital of his grievances, being particularly anxious to uphold the orderly character of his house and its customary visitants in the presence of a licensing magistrate, when the latter interrupted him, by inquiring the name of the prisoner. "He won't tell us, your Worship, though we have asked him twenty times," was the reply.

"Fellow!" cried the justice, with a stern look and voice; "this turn will not serve you. Declare your name instantly!"

"I shouldn't mind laying a guinea that you would yourself approve of my reasons for not making it public," said the prisoner, laying his arms gently akimbo, and quietly surveying the magistrate.

"No doubt, sirrah, you have motives enough of your own for keeping it a secret; but it is not for me to consult your convenience. As a magistrate, I never make any distinctions. Were you a peer, and had misconducted yourself in the manner alleged, I should feel it my

duty to expose and punish you ; and as you are not unaccustomed, if we may judge by appearances, to examinations like the present, I know not why you should be so scrupulous, nor why we should respect your wishes for concealment."

"Nay, I have no wishes of the sort upon my own account."

"Whose feelings, then, are you so anxious to spare?"

"Yours!" said the prisoner, raising his croaking voice to its highest pitch.

Always suspicious and apprehensive, the magistrate, starting at this declaration, pounced his keen restless eye upon the prisoner, and pored upon his features as if he would pierce them through. But the lapse of twenty years, the effects of climate, and more than all, the total change of appearance produced by the ravages of intemperance and disease, which had converted a broad-set, hale man into the ghastly emaciated figure now before him, baffled every effort of his memory, and he continued in a peremptory tone—"Fellow! I know you not,—I never saw you before in my whole life; I

desire no concealments, and I charge you once more to declare your name."

"I will first whisper it in your Worship's ear, and if you then desire it, I will repeat it publicly." Without waiting permission for this act of confidence, he advanced, leant his head close to that of the magistrate, and pronounced in a voice inaudible to all but the party thus addressed, "My name is Barak Gunthorpe!"

Startling and electrical was the effect of this communication. Pushing his chair back with his feet, as if recoiling from a serpent, Welbeck ejaculated in an almost breathless whisper—"Gracious Heaven! I see it, now you come nearer, I ought to have known those wolfish eyes. Man! man!—" He could utter no more. His straining eyes, wild with terror, were riveted upon the face of the prisoner, he grasped either arm of the chair with a convulsive energy, his teeth, after chattering together for a few seconds, became immovably clenched, a frightful rigidity spread itself over his features, by an unconscious effort he half raised himself from the chair, and then falling backwards in a fit, remained stiff and motionless!

Sudden amazement and consternation sate upon every countenance, except that of the prisoner, who, with a half-suppressed chuckle, exclaimed, " I thought I should fetch him up with a broad yaw, but I hope he's not going to founder yet a while, or, at least, not till I have had the overhauling of him."

Some of the bystanders, as soon as they had recovered from their bewilderment, alarmed the family, and in a few minutes Emily, followed by two maid-servants, rushed into the hall, when, with the assistance of old Wiverley, they wheeled the still senseless justice into the parlour. Shrinking and timid as she was at the mere apprehension of a danger or trial of any sort, Emily's presence of mind seldom deserted her at the moment when it was wanted. Her timidity expended itself beforehand; whatever courage remained at the bottom of her heart was therefore ready for emergencies. Infinitely more distressed than any of the others, and yet far more collected, she ordered such remedies to be applied as experience had taught her to be efficacious; for these attacks, though rare, were by no means unprecedented; and when she saw

that her father was beginning to recover his senses, she dismissed all the attendants from the room, and sate down by his side. Even Wiverley, though an old and faithful servant, she would not allow to remain, spite of his instances to that effect; for her father, when labouring under the influence of terror, prostration of spirit, or that partial hallucination of mind with which he was occasionally afflicted, would sometimes, in remorseful self-accusation, or agonized deprecations of punishment, accuse himself of crimes, which she knew not how to believe, but which, nevertheless, she did not wish to be overheard by any ear but her own.

A deep-drawn sigh was the first evidence of returning consciousness, after which he slowly opened his eyes, and seeing his daughter by his side, exclaimed in a faint voice, “ Emy, my child, I have had a horrible dream—most horrible!” and he was again silent, as if endeavouring to recall the fearful vision that had thus disturbed him. Endeavouring, after a brief space, to raise himself up, he suddenly exclaimed, “ Ha ! what is the meaning of this ? This is my chair of justice ! How came it here ?—It was not a

dream then, not a vision,—but Barak Gunthorpe is alive—he has been here! The Lord have mercy upon me! I am a lost man. What shall I do? where shall I hide myself? whither shall I fly?” and his face again became frightfully convulsed as he fell back in his chair.

“Be composed, my dearest father!” said Emily, tenderly embracing him; “you were examining a stranger in the hall when you were seized with one of these terrible fits; but it is passing away, and you will shortly be yourself again.”

“Never, never!” exclaimed Welbeck, clutching the arm of his daughter, and then suddenly letting it go, and striking his hand sharply upon his forehead, he continued, “The gibbet! the gibbet! I have seen that which may hurry me to the gallows, and leave you, my child, a disgraced and pennyless orphan!”

“Utter not such horrid words, my dearest father! you know not what you say.”

“Where is the man?” cried Welbeck, in a loud and fierce voice.

“What man?” asked Emily, startled at her father’s sudden vehemence.

“What man? *The* man! he who holds my life and fortune in his hand, the cause of all my guilt, the curse of my existence—the villain Barak Gunthorpe! Hah! have I pronounced his name? Forget it, Emy. If you love your father, if you value yourself, if you would save me from punishment, perhaps from a public execution, and yourself from becoming an ignominious pauper, never, never, never, let that accursed name escape from your lips, as it has from mine. Let me think, let me think. Why did you not tell me where he was? Where is he? where is he?”

“I left a pinioned man standing in the hall, surrounded with constables and other people.”

“That is the wretch! he must not remain there; he must not be pinioned. Gracious heaven! I may myself be soon pinioned, and standing at the bar of justice to answer for my life. Send him to me instantly. No, no, I will first see Wiverley. Let him attend me immediately. Wiverley! Wiverley! where is Wiverley?”

While Emily retired to fetch the clerk, her father, by one of those violent efforts which sometimes enabled him to subdue for the moment

the fearful perturbations of mind to which he was subject, had acquired such a comparative degree of composure when Wiverley arrived, as to demand, without much external manifestation of the dismay that racked his heart, the particulars of the charge upon which the stranger was brought before him. When informed that it was only a drunken affray and assault, he testified manifest relief, and breathed more freely. "Tell these good people," said he, "that the prisoner is an old acquaintance of my own—would to heaven that I had never seen him!—that for important family considerations he wishes to withhold his name, but that he is willing to make compensation to all parties for the damage they have sustained. Settle this foolish affair, Wiverley, without loss of time. You need not speak to the prisoner. Mind that, I entreat you, good Wiverley, and let not any other question him. Emy will give you whatever money they may require."

"But how much shall I offer them?" inquired the clerk, who, when he found that Welbeck was to be the paymaster, concluded that he would wish to drive a close bargain.

“ Begone ! and give them what they ask ! ” cried the magistrate, impatiently waving his hand, and adding, when his clerk had left the room, “ O my child ! my child ! what are gold and bank-notes to me now, when to-morrow I may be an arraigned criminal, and all the wealth for which I have toiled and sinned may be forfeited and gone ? Take the keys of my safe, give these people what they demand, and, for God’s sake ! send them from the house. I am upon thorns, tenterhooks, while they have this man among them, one word from whose mouth may ruin us all for ever. Get him away from them ; separate them, separate them ; some of them may recollect him.—Go ! go ! go ! ”

Emily shortly returned, stating that the landlord and his companions had been satisfied and dismissed, but that the constables, before they withdrew, desired to know whether they were to remove the manacles and set the prisoner at liberty. “ Let him be unbound, by all means, ” was the reply ; “ I know the purport of his visit : he will demand speech of me, and he must have it—must have it ; though I would rather turn mad dogs into my bosom to devour my heart at

once, than have its unhealed and festering sores torn open, as they will be, by this detested pandar to my former guilt !”

Emily returned to the hall with her father’s orders that the stranger should be unfettered, which the constables immediately obeyed, and then took their departure. “ You are the justice’s daughter, I suppose,” sullenly croaked the man, pulling the sleeves of his coat over his wrists ;—“ why, ay, Miss, this is the least the old gentleman could do. Put handcuffs upon me, here in the Manor-house, and before Gideon Welbeck—I beg your pardon, Miss, I mean before his worship Justice Welbeck ! Heh ! heh ! heh ! Well, I came for justice, and so, with your leave, Miss, I should like just to have half an hour’s private chat with his Worship.”

“ If you will be pleased to wait here for a few minutes I will return and conduct you to my father,” said Emily, hurrying from the hall, and not wishing that any of the servants should communicate with the stranger.

“ Not here, not in the parlour—I will not see him here,” said Welbeck, when his daughter

rejoined him ; “ let it be in my own room,—in the porch-room, where we cannot be overheard ; nevertheless, watch, my child, watch carefully that no eaves-droppers or listeners approach the door. Thank you, thank you ; I want not your arm, I feel strong enough now. Bring the wretch to the porch-room.”

Emily having conducted the stranger to her father’s apartment, stationed herself in the passage outside, awaiting with extreme agitation the result of this mysterious interview. Upon entering the chamber, Gunthorpe drew a chair, and seated himself with the easy assurance of a vulgar man, who, feeling that he has a power over his superior which brings him down to his own level, holds himself absolved from all observances of respect.

“ Wretched and desperate man ! ” said Welbeck, willing, if possible, to intimidate his unwelcome visitant, “ why have you ventured hither ? Know you not that if you are recognized, the whole scheme of your villany may be detected, and that your life may be the forfeit of your rashness ? ”

“ Well, and isn’t it all the same with *your*

villany, and *your* life, please your Worship?" asked Gunthorpe, pronouncing the latter word with a sneering chuckle, which was renewed as often as he subsequently repeated it. "You must recollect that I have been upwards of twenty years ago, and if you yourself didn't recollect me, 'tishn't likely any body else will. Ay, I'm quite another guess chap to look at from what I was when we settled that little bit of a job between us; for the climate of the East Indies, and the post of purser's clerk on board a King's ship, don't make a man younger or fatter, to say nothing of grog, for which I always had too strong a fancy. Why, we haven't met afore since I popped the young one into Davy's-locker; and you've never thanked me for it, though it has made you as rich as a Jew, and a magistrate, and a great man, and what not.—I say, your Worship, I settled his business for him properly, didn't I? To be sure, it did blow a spanking gale from the east and north-east when I turned the youngster adrift, and I reckon the salt-water soon stopped his squalling and caterwauling, and made him

into famous chicken-meat for the fishes. Heh ? he ! he !”

“Callous, remorseless wretch ! can you make a jest of that horrible murder, for such it was ? Can you laugh at that upon which I can never reflect without a pang of anguish that sometimes drives me to the brink of madness ?”

“Gammon ! It hasn’t prevented your feathering your nest, and I don’t see why it should hinder your laughing. You’ve had a pretty sight more reason to laugh than I have, what with parks, and manors, and estates, and stocks of all sorts, that they tell me you’ve scraped together ; while I have been toiling and drudging in Canada, and the East Indies, and the Lord knows where, as a miserable purser’s clerk, sometimes without a shot in my pocket to buy grog. Now this I don’t call quite fair, considering I’ve only got to open my mouth to make all your fine estates flow away from you like an ebb-tide, and leave you upon the rocks, high and dry, bulged and scuttled !”

“But you cannot thus open your mouth without giving the hangman power over your own life.”

“As a magistrate, your Worship ought to know that I can 'peach, turn King's evidence; and whether or not, I can better afford to run risks than you can, not having any parks, and estates, and lands, and riches, and such like, to forfeit.”

“But you have your life to lose, and this you are now putting in peril by so rashly venturing into this neighbourhood. Why have you done this?”

“Why? you know why very well;—'cause you wouldn't answer my letters, nor send me any money. I should have come and beat up your quarters long since, if I could have got discharged, or obtained a passage back to Europe.”

“And what is your object in seeking me out now?” inquired Welbeck, not making any reply to his observation about the letters.

“Why, you know that too, pretty well, I suspect. I want money. I'm not going to be left without a double allowance of grog, when you are rolling in riches.”

“I gave you, twenty years ago, all that you demanded.”

“ Like enough ; but I didn’t know then that the Manor-house estate would prove such a rich prize ; and if you ’ve had twenty years’ respite, you need the less grumble at cashing up now. But to come to book, for I hate long stories—I don’t want to venture here again, ’cause, as you say, there may be risk in it for both of us ; and moreover, I don’t desire to see your face again, and ten to one you ’ve no particular wish to see mine. So, to lay me up snug and warm for the rest of my life—(I sha’n’t live long, the doctors tell me, but that’s no odds,)—and to give me my double allowance of grog—which they say is killing me, but I can’t help it if it do, I must have a thousand pounds at once, and that I call letting you off uncommon cheap.”

“ And if I give you this sum, what security have I against future applications of the same sort ?”

“ Security ! why the chance that I shall drink myself to death afore the money’s all gone. Besides, I shall go back to Newcastle, where I was born, and never leave it again, for I’m too old and ill to roam over the world any more.”

“On that condition you shall have the money: but to ensure your betaking yourself immediately to Newcastle, it shall only be paid to you in that town.”

“With all my heart; provided you give me enough to pay my passage, for I’ve turned my last yellow-boy into grog.”

“That shall be supplied to you: and now, have you any other demands to make?”

“Yes. I didn’t get half a ration for breakfast this morning, and so I should like my dinner here, in the Manor-house, if your Worship has no objection; and if you have any Jamaica rum, or prime old Cognac, I shouldn’t mind drinking your health in it.”

Such was Welbeck’s terror of Gunthorpe’s being recognized if he returned to Thaxted, or of his blurting out in his cups some fact or confession of perilous importance to both parties, that he not only willingly proffered him a dinner, but urged him to sleep at the Manor-house, and take advantage of a London stage, which would pass the Park Lodge on the following morning. To this proposition a ready assent being given, Welbeck gladly quitted the

room, for the sight of the man's face, with all the hideous recollections that it called forth, was indescribably repugnant to him; and summoning Wiverley, he bade him supply the stranger with such refreshments as he needed, not forgetting the liquor, the consumption of which seemed to constitute the sole remaining enjoyment of the life it was shortening. Wiverley was instructed to furnish his dinner in the porch-room, to prepare a bed for him in the nearest chamber, to converse with him as little as possible, and to bring word to his master when he should have retired to rest. This he did at an early hour, for his last night's slumbers in the cage had not been very refreshing; and it was an incredible relief to the mind of Welbeck, who had passed the whole evening in the most harrowing alternations of remorse and terror, when he learnt that this perilous inmate, overcome by hard drinking, lay buried in a profound sleep. Appalling indeed had been the strife and the misgiving of his heart, for the apparition of Gunthorpe, whom he had latterly hoped and believed to have been dead, was an event fraught with ten thousand dan-

gers, present and to come. The fellow might repent his bargain, and rise in his demands; he might unintentionally betray the dreadful secret on which their mutual fates were suspended; he might be recognized before he left the neighbourhood, which would be scarcely less perilous; or even if he were conveyed away without discovery, and actually went to Newcastle, what assurance was there against his returning at some future time, to sear his eyes, to harrow up his heart, to make fresh extortions, which might, perhaps, finally terminate in exposure, ignominy, and punishment?

Exhausted as Welbeck was by the fit with which he had been visited, by the violent effort that had restored to him a certain degree of self-possession during the colloquy with Gunthorpe, and by the harassing agitation of his evening thoughts, he would still have been unable to obtain the repose of which he stood so much in need, had not Emily prevailed on him to take a powerful composing draught, which she always kept prepared for those moments of morbid and distressing excitation. In the distraction of his mind, he threw himself

upon the bed without undressing, and, under the influence of the opiate, at length sunk into sleep. But his slumbers were haunted with fearful dreams and imaginary spectral apparitions, more appalling than even his waking terrors. Alarmed by his groans and cries, the watchful Emily, who always slept in an outer chamber, hurried to his bed-side, and beheld her wretched parent sitting up, though still asleep, and struggling apparently with some hideous nightmare. His hands involuntarily opened and clutched, his face was convulsed, his lips were drawn back in horror from his grinding teeth, his nostrils opened and collapsed with the violence of his hard, audible breathing, a profuse perspiration covered his features, and even dropped from his hair, like morning dew from the leaves of a tree, and he at length gasped in a broken, agitated whisper—"Yes, it is the court of assize, there is the judge; see! yonder is the sheriff with his white wand—the clerk of the arraigns is reading the indictment; ha! who is that in the witness-box?—It is he! it is he! the villain Barak Gunthorpe! But they cannot punish

me! it was that remorseless villain, not I, that did the deed. And yet they drag me to the scaffold! Pray with me, pray with me, reverend sir, for I have much need of mercy. Heavens! what a multitude of faces, what millions of eyes are staring at me! And there is my poor boy Godfrey in the crowd, and my darling Enily! Hark! she screams! she faints! The Lord have mercy upon me! Save me! save me!” and uttering a deep groan he again sank upon his pillow.

Aghast and heart-stricken at what she saw and heard, Enily dropt into a chair beside him, clasping her hands together, and intently watching her unhappy parent. Though he breathed hard, he seemed for awhile to be more composed, but the phantasmagoria of his disordered imagination did but present to him new images of terror. Again raising himself suddenly in the bed, he pointed with his finger, exclaiming in the same agitated whisper as before, “See! there is the beautiful little boy, walking along the surface of the waters in his winding-sheet and shroud!” and then gradually raising his finger higher and higher, he continued, “Look!

he mounts ! he mounts up—up—up ! the clouds open—he is received into the sky, the angels long to kiss him, as they see that lovely child, with his curly hair, passing sorrowfully before them. See ! he kneels at the footstool of Heaven, he accuses me of having compassed his death,—the name of Gideon Welbeck rings through the sky—the music of Heaven ceases, and the horror-stricken angels set up one universal shriek of murder ! murder ! murder !”

During this soliloquy Welbeck had gradually raised his voice until he shouted out the concluding words with a yelling vehemence that effectually broke the spells of slumber, and opening his eyes with a bewildered look, he exclaimed,—“ Is that you, Emy ? where am I ? what noise was that I heard ?”

“ You have been dreaming, Sir ; you cried out in your sleep, and I hurried to your bed-side,” replied the afflicted daughter.

“ Are you sure it was only a dream ? Methought they came to apprehend me on a criminal charge ; methought——”

At this moment a low knocking was heard at the door of the outer bed-chamber, when the

terrified Welbeck, starting up and seizing one of the pistols which were always placed by his bedside, cried out, "Ha! it was no dream! They come—they come! but I will not be taken alive, they shall not make a public spectacle of me; if Gunthorpe is with them, I will shoot the villain through the head!"

"For Heaven's sake, be composed," said Emily, trembling violently, for she began to be infected with her father's fears. "It is nothing that need alarm us; I will see what it is, and return instantly." Hurrying with unsteady feet to the outer door, she found that Wiverley, disturbed by the shouts of murder, had hastened to her apartment to see what was the matter. Emily thanked him for his attention, stating that her father had probably been reading some frightful play, which had suggested the horrid dream that had occasioned him to call out in his sleep. "Ah, Miss Emily! Miss Emily!" cried the old man, "these terrors of the night come from something worse, I fear, than reading plays. I wouldn't know what his Worship has known, no, not for all his gold,

and all his parks and broad manors, if they were doubled ten times over."

"Return to bed, good Wiverley," said Emily, "and say nothing of what you may see or hear; for my father is not well, and knows not what he says. Go, go—good night!" With which words she flew back to her parent, whom she found in the same attitude, the loaded pistol in his trembling hand, and looks of fearful desperation in his face. "Soh!" he ejaculated, falling back upon the pillow, when told that the knocking had only proceeded from Wiverley, "I am respited, I can breathe again—O conscience! conscience! what a coward dost thou make of me!"

He relinquished his grasp of the pistol, as if unconsciously, and Emily, observing that his eyes were again closed, softly removed it, and taking its fellow from the table, concealed both the weapons in the closet of her own apartment, when she returned to the bed-side, and sate watching, until she had the consolation of finding that her father had sunk into a sleep, which, from the calmer expression of his features,

seemed to be undisturbed by any of the terrific phantasms that had so lately haunted him. She again retired, therefore, to her own bed, and after remaining for some time a prey to the most heart-lacerating thoughts, sunk at last into an uneasy dose.

Not long, however, had she thus remained, when she started up on hearing a footfall, and with mingled amazement and dismay, saw her father passing out into the corridor, holding the night-lamp in one hand, and in the other a naked dagger, which she had not observed when she removed the pistols. In a moment she was by his side, but she dreaded the effect of suddenly arresting him in his progress ; for though he was now awake, she feared, by the wild expression of his eyes, that his mind was wandering, and that he was unconscious of his actions. “ Hist ! hist ! ” he whispered, as he stole forward on tiptoe, “ this is the way to Gunthorpe’s room ; the villain shall never appear against me ! If he is awake, I will dispatch him with my dagger ; and if he sleeps, I will smother, smother, smother him, and all the world shall think he died of drunkenness !

Ha! ha! ha! I shall then be able to sleep o' nights."

The sepulchral voice, the hideous laugh, the wild features that assumed a spectral appearance in the ghastly glare of the lamp, and the low echoes of his feet as he thus traversed the passage in the dead of night, and with such a murderous design, presented a combination so awful and terrific, that the shuddering Emily could scarcely refrain from sinking to the floor. Summoning her courage, however, she softly took his arm, and by a gentle compulsion, to which he passively yielded, succeeded in guiding him back to his own room. At sight of the bed, his hallucination seemed in some degree to cease, for he deposited the lamp and the dagger upon the table, and recognising Emily exclaimed, "What! not a-bed yet, child? it is late, and I am cold; quick! quick! cover me up, and begone!"

He then threw himself upon the bed, his daughter covered him up as he had desired, and after watching for some little time by his side, had once more the satisfaction of seeing him sink into repose, when she removed the

daggar, secured the outer door, and drawing an arm-chair to his bed-side, placed herself within it in such a manner that he could not move without disturbing her. These precautions were, however, unnecessary ; the opiate, which was a powerful one, began now to exert its influence, and though his slumbers were not refreshing in their nature, they were heavy and deep, for he did not awake until a late hour of the following morning.

CHAPTER IX.

Oh ! what is man, his excellence and strength,
When, in an hour of trial and desertion,
Reason, his noblest power, may be suborned
To plead the cause of vile assassination ?

FATAL CURIOSITY.

HENRY MELCOMB, whom we left asleep in the concealed vault of the smugglers at the Grange-farm, passed a much better night than he had anticipated, the potion administered to him by Mary having, as the Captain had predicted, produced the most beneficial effects. When he awoke, the giddiness and head-ache had left him, and he suffered no other inconvenience than the pain arising from the bruise, which, to one of his hardy temperament, was of very trivial importance.

“ Well, lad, what cheer? how goes it?” cried his kind-hearted host, when he visited him on the following morning. “ Lord! I knew you wouldn’t long be lying on your beam-ends! I said we should presently right ye, after taking that cordial of Polly’s. Shiver the Longsplice! if I wouldn’t back Polly against all the humbug-doctors and gallipot-lubbers in Hampshire! Well, lad, you shall stay with us as long as you like; at all events, till the hue and cry is over; for I dare say there’ll be capiases enough out, and we’ll make your quarters comfortable for you, I warrant. You’ll find our secret larder t’other end of the vault; always full of game and venison, generally the fattest bucks out of Boldre-wood Walk,—’cause why?—’twouldn’t do for the keepers and us to be on bad terms together, seeing we might spoil one another’s sport; so we supply them with free-trade gin and backy, with a silk-handkercher, or so, now and then, for their girls, and they keep our larder full of birds, and hares, and bucks, and such like, and that’s all fair, and no one ha’n’t a right to complain—’cause exchange is no robbery, you know. Then we

have spirits and wines of all sorts, at first cost. For my own part, I seldom drink any thing but punch, good stiff punch—but we've got plenty of claret, and thin, wishy-washy French stuff, if you like it, though I don't hold 'em to be any better than so much belly-vengeance."

"When you first talked of venison," said Henry, "I concluded that you took the liberty of supplying yourselves out of the Forest, or neighbouring parks."

"Vast there, lad! no need of that, when the keepers fill our larder for us. Besides, d'ye think I'd have any sneaking, rascally poachers in my company, that would go a deer-stalking in a gentleman's park, which is little better than flat robbery? What! old Blacklocks! old Lion Boulderson encourage poachers, and such like loose fellows? Not I! As to the King's deer, indeed, that's all fair game, and quite another guess matter. Ar'n't such a canting humbug as to pretend there's any harm in that, any more than in my own business of a free-trader. Lord! we've a fellow here in the Forest—Green Jemmy we call him,—'cause why?—always wears a green dress, that he may hide the

better in the trees. A rare fellow that among the King's deer! and as honest as the day, for he never touches any body's else. Got a rifle that unscrews into three pieces, and goes into his pocket; drinks with the keepers, pretends to be one of us,—hah! hah!—never suspect him—'cause why?—he ha'n't got a gun, as they think; so he knows their haunt, cuts across the Forest, shoots a fat buck, drags him into the bushes, ups into a tree, where he waits till night, and then runs into port with his prize: and in this way honest Jemmy will carry you off a hundred head in the year. True as ever I 'm sitting here this very minute; only ask Rough-and-ready else. Jemmy would have made a capital free-trader, for he's quite the gentleman, quite one of us; only he likes dry land better than the sea. Well, but you never said, lad, what game you would choose for dinner."

Henry told him that he would only trespass upon his hospitality for a breakfast, since, as he now felt sufficiently well to take care of himself, it was his purpose to quit his present place of concealment in the course of the morn-

ing. If the Captain was surprised at this declaration, he was still more amazed when his guest informed him that he excessively regretted the well-meant, though most inconsiderate, zeal that had prompted his rescue; that he particularly condemned the violence which had accompanied that rash enterprize; and added, that, although he might doubt the wisdom of authorizing imprisonment for debt, he felt obedience to the laws to be so paramount a duty, that he should immediately return before Justice Welbeck, and surrender himself a prisoner. "But let me be clearly understood upon one point," said Henry, "whatever may be the consequences of my forcible rescue, they shall fall upon my own head, for never will I betray the generous friends whose misguided impetuosity led them to extricate me from the hands of the bailiffs."

"I arn't afraid of your blabbing," said the Captain—" 'cause why?—you 're a brave and hearty fellow—Hordle Cliff for that, and it's none but cowards that scamp and peach. But start my timbers! what do you mean by misguided friends? Didn't you do my Polly and Gentleman George a good-turn t'other day, and were

I and honest Rough-and-Ready to stand by you, and see you grabbed by the land-sharks, without ever lending a hand to scuttle them? No!—not if you preached till Christmas. I don't pretend to argufy as you do,"—and indeed Henry had, as usual, stated his opinions in somewhat too logical a form for his auditor—"but the upshot of my argument is this, if you go and put yourself into limbo of your own accord, you're the biggest fool in all Hampshire—that's my notion of the matter."

Notwithstanding this verdict of stultification,² Henry persisted in his intention, and as that remarkable decision of manner to which we have before adverted, plainly evinced that nothing would dissuade him from his purpose, the Captain forbore from any farther expostulation, contenting himself with observing, "that he had done his duty, but if a chap wouldn't be helped out of a scrape, there was no use in helping him."

Just as Henry was preparing, however, to take his departure, information was brought by some of the scouts, whom the Captain kept constantly upon the watch, that there were

suspicious-looking fellows lurking about the farm, who, in all probability, were men employed by the bailiffs to recover their prisoner. Henry would have willingly surrendered to them at once, but as he could not do this without betraying where he had been concealed, and thus compromising his rescuers, he consented to remain two days longer in the asylum they had provided for him; when, the coast being reported clear, he quitted the Grange-farm, the Captain giving him such a cordial grasp of the hand at parting, that it was numbed for some minutes afterwards, and bent his course to the Manor-house, to make a public and formal surrender of his person. This happened on the morning after the memorable visit of Barak Gunthorpe, which worthy personage had just reached the untenanted lodge of the park, accompanied by old Wiverley, who had been specially charged not to quit him till he saw him deposited on the top of the London coach, when they encountered Henry at the gate. Gunthorpe started with amazement, rubbed his eyes, stared at Henry and exclaimed, "*Why it is*

he, unless I'm blind drunk ! ay, that it is, as sure as ever there's rum in Jamaica ! I say, Sir, ax pardon, arn't you Mr. Henry Melcomb ?"

"That is my name."

"Whew !" cried Gunthorpe, as he gave a long whistle, slapped his hand upon his thigh, and stared at him with increased astonishment. "Here's a pretty rig ! Curse me, if I didn't think you were thousands of miles off in the back settlements of America, which is the last I heard of you. Why, you haven't surely forgot me, Master Henry."

"Indeed, my friend, I do not at present recollect you ; what is your name ?"

"My name aboard ship was Joe Davis ; mayhap I've another, but no odds for that ; don't you remember Groggy Joe, as they called me ?"

"What ! the purser's clerk on board my father's ship ? yes, yes, I now recall your features, but you are much altered since I last saw you."

"Like enough, it's some years ago. They told me there was a young chap of the name of Melcomb, that had been after Justice Wel-

beck's daughter, and only to think of it's being you, when I thought you were among the Yankees! I say, Sir, you and I may want to have a palaver together, so I'll make bold to ax where I may find you?"

"Most likely, I am sorry to say, in the gaol at Southampton, for I am now going before Justice Welbeck to surrender myself a prisoner for debt."

"What! *you* a prisoner for debt, and committed by Gideon Welbeck! No, no—curse me if that must be!—that's a deal too bad."

"The coach is coming," said Wiverley, "and his Worship strictly ordered me——"

"Ay, ay, old boy," said Gunthorpe, "I sha'n't forget the condition, for a bird in the hand's worth two in the bush; but I mustn't cut adrift from you, Mr. Melcomb, without knowing how I may pull you up again."

"If I can serve you," said Henry, "you will always hear of me from Mrs. Tenby, at the George, at Thaxted; but my present destination is to prison at Southampton."

"Why, it's not unlike, Sir, that we may serve one another; but I'll think of that while

I'm scudding along the road. The prison at Southampton—I know it, and so I did afore ever you were born."

The stage was now stopped, Gunthorpe mounted, Wiverley remained to watch him out of sight as he had been ordered, and Henry made his way across the Park, musing upon this unexpected meeting, upon the chances of his seeing Emily, and the combination of untoward circumstances which were thus about to consign him to a prison, loaded with imputations of offence which he had never committed, and yet from which, such was the peculiar waywardness of his fate, he could not exculpate himself, without criminating others whom he had promised never to implicate. On his arrival at the house, he made his way into the hall, where he found several of the Thaxted villagers, two constables, and a few strangers, assembled upon business. The surprise of those who recognized him, at his unexpected appearance in such a place, was excited to the highest pitch, when he stated that he had been no party to the rescue, and that he came to surrender himself a voluntary prisoner, acknowledging,

however, no other offence than the debt for which he had been arrested. The by-standers informed him that the justice was very ill, and that they were expecting the return of Wiverville, to learn whether there was any chance of his worship being able to sit in the course of the morning. While they were thus talking, Emily entered the Hall, and had just stated to some of the party that her father was too much indisposed to attend to any official business, when she caught sight of Henry. A start of surprise, and a tremor of blushing confusion betrayed her emotion; she curtsied hastily, and was about to withdraw, when Henry exclaimed, "One word, Miss Welbeck, only one word, before you retire. Let me implore you not to trust to appearances, but to believe me as innocent of this, as I am of every other charge that has been brought against me."

"I do, I do!" cried Emily, fervently clasping her hands together, and regarding him with a look of unshaken trust and attachment. "I have seen Mr. Penguin." She hesitated, blushed still deeper than before, and her increasing confusion would only allow her to add, "My

father is very ill, he can see no one to-day," when she hurried out of the Hall.

Henry understood not this allusion to the justice done him by Penguin, who, since the full exposure of his wife's character, had publicly stated his total disbelief of the charges she had brought against him; but he could not misinterpret Emily's expressive look; it intimated something beyond mere confidence in his innocence; and in this cheering hope of her undiminished regard, he felt inspired with fresh courage to endure the present trials that threatened him, and patiently to await the final vindication of his character. At Wiverley's return, he desired that his surrender might be formally registered by the clerk in the minute-book, and then requesting a constable to take charge of him, and accompany him to the bailiff, one of whom he understood to be still sojourning at Thaxted, he replaced himself in the hands of the officer, and desired that he might be conducted to prison, in execution of the writ where-with he had been already served. An occurrence so novel puzzled the apprehensions of the

legal functionary. Lunacy seemed to be the most plausible solution of the enigma ; but as there might be a lucid interval in which his recovered prisoner should attempt to escape, or as the same rough friends who rescued him before might be lying in wait to liberate him a second time, the bailiff ordered a post-chaise, which conveyed them both to Southampton, in the prison of which town Henry was duly deposited.

Although he was thus cruelly immured, without the remotest prospect of liberation, he immediately forgot himself and his own wrongs, in plans for remedying sundry errors in the administration of the prison, the existence of which his inquiries, aided by his own natural shrewdness, had enabled him to discover in the first hour after his arrival ; and which, at no remote period, he lived to expose and reform. Solaced by such benevolent schemes, though not without an occasional pang of regret, as he adverted to the impassable gulf that now seemed to be placed between him and Emily Welbeck, he laid himself down at night upon his miserable pallet, and enjoyed that sound, sweet sleep which

can only be tasted by those whose calm conscience, supplying repose from within, renders them independent of external circumstances.

Early on the following morning he heard a knocking at the door of the little closet in which he slept, and for which, inconvenient and forlorn as it was, he had agreed to pay an extra price, because it was detached, and he had no chum, or companion. On opening the door, he beheld Barak Gunthorpe, whom, however, he only knew by his name of Davis, and who stated, that instead of proceeding to London, after their late separation, he had quitted the coach when it had travelled a few miles, and had made his way to Southampton, for the express purpose of the interview and confabulation which he now came to seek.

“ Indeed,” said Henry, “ I am sorry you have taken so much trouble, for I fear I have now little means of serving you.”

“ Like enough ; but I can give you plenty of means of serving me and yourself too, if you’ll find inclination. I say, Sir, we can’t be overheard here, can we ? No shot-holes for listeners, are there ? no leaks in the sheething, for

I don't want to run my head into the fool's noose, if I can help it."

Henry declared that he might state whatever he had to say, with a certainty of perfect secrecy; and Gunthorpe, having first locked the door, continued, "I say, Master Henry," (it was thus that he had formerly been accustomed to address him,) "what 'll ye give me for my share, if I make a great man of ye: put ye in possession of lands, and estates, and fine houses, and lots of money, and all sorts of good things?"

"I am by no means clearly convinced that these *are* good things," said Henry, beginning to suspect, from the strangeness of his question, that his old friend "Groggy Joe," was still under the influence of his favourite liquor.

"Not good things! What do ye mean by that? Won't they give you every thing you can desire upon earth?"

"No; they cannot confer upon me that which I should most covet, for they cannot ensure to me health, nor content, nor the esteem of my fellow-creatures, nor long life here, nor eternal happiness hereafter."

"You're a rum chap, and so you always

were, from a child; but I tell ye what they can do—they can enable you to be revenged upon your enemies.”

“As a Christian I can do this without money, or means of any sort, for I can forgive them; I can return them good for evil, and thus convert their hearts, while I gratify my own.”

“I don’t understand this sort of gammon; but at all events, money can do one thing for you which nothing else can, it can take you out of your present misery as a prisoner.”

“I am not miserable, for I have committed no sin. Besides, I think I can reform some of my brother prisoners, and improve their lot, and I am never unhappy when I have a prospect of benefiting others.”

“Curse me, if you’re not the queerest customer ever I came across! Why, I suppose lands, and houses, and fine fortunes, will go a-begging next, since fellows in prison don’t think ’em worth having. But lookee here, Master Henry, what should ye say, if all these things were to give you Miss Welbeck into the bargain?”

“How! what should you know of my re-

gard for Miss Welbeck ? Yes, indeed, if without any sacrifice of honour in myself, or infliction of injury upon another, I could call Emily my own, and be enabled to support her becomingly—but these are idle dreams !”

“ No they ar’n’t ; I think I can undertake to do all this for you.”

“ *You* undertake !—are you in your sober senses ?”

“ Ha’n’t touched a drop this morning. Lookee here ! do ye think such an old curmudgeon as Welbeck, would have given me this here order for a thousand pounds, if I hadn’t got a secret worth knowing.” And taking the letter from a greasy old leather-case, he opened, and put it into Henry’s hands, who expressed no small surprise at its contents.

“ Now, as I have a conscience, such as it is,” resumed Gunthorpe, “ and had much rather do the right thing, especially if I don’t lose by it, I suppose you will promise to be a pretty sight better than a thousand pound to me, if I make good all I say, throwing Miss Welbeck into the bargain ?”

“ I will make no engagement, I will promise

nothing till I know fully the nature and extent of your communication ; after which, you must trust to be rewarded according to my sense of justice."

" I don't object to that, for you were always a generous young fellow, and I dare say will give me more than ever I should think of asking. But there's one thing you must and shall promise afore I open my mouth, and that is, to forgive me my share of the business, and never to do any tking to bring me into trouble ; for, harkye, Master Henry, though I hope I shall make it all up to ye now, I've been the very worst enemy ever you had in the world."

" Have you ? then take my hand in token of my free forgiveness, and if I have any other enemies, I wish they were now here, that I might as surely make friends of them, as I hope to do of you."

" You're a noble young fellow, Master Henry, and so you always were ; the bigger rogue I to sarve you as I did, and keep you so long out of your own. However, listen to me, and I'll set it all to rights now, besides telling you as strange a story about yourself

as ever you read of in a printed book. You're sure there's nobody can't hear? All right and tight? Very well, then here goes."

From the statement of Gunthorpe, to which we shall add many particulars wherewith he was unacquainted, but which are necessary in order to give the reader a full comprehension of the case, it appeared that Henry was the only son and heir of Cyril Welbeck, the late proprietor of the Manor-house estate, who had been dead nearly twenty years. Previously to his decease, his infant son, then only about two years of age, having been removed from the mansion, to prevent all danger of his catching an infectious fever, with which his sole remaining parent was struggling, resided at a cottage on the banks of Beaulley Water, called the Fishing-house, under the care of old Nettletop, who was a servant of the family, and his wife, who was the child's nurse. At this cottage was kept a small, half-decked pleasure-boat, in which, during the fine days of summer, the 'Squire, as Cyril Welbeck was universally called in those days, was accustomed to sail or row, generally up Beaulley, or Southampton-Waters, but some-

times making short excursions along the coast. Barak Gunthorpe, having been a sailor, had the charge of this boat, and was always employed to navigate her during these little trips, acting at other times in the capacity of an under game-keeper. When the 'Squire died, Gideon Welbeck, a distant relation, although the next legal heir to the estate after Henry, came down from London to attend the funeral. At this juncture Gideon, always an expensive and dissolute man, had ruined himself by that fatal propensity to gambling, which his son Godfrey subsequently inherited from him ; a few hundreds were all that remained to him of a handsome patrimony ; he saw no chance of avoiding utter destitution ; he was a proud, gloomy man, and the prospect made him desperate.

A few days after the funeral, he went out sailing in the boat with Gunthorpe, when the latter observed, what a pity it was that a gentleman like his honour, who was of an age to enjoy the good things of life, should be kept out of the fine estate to which he was the next heir, by a brat of two years old, who would never know the value of what he lost, if he

were to be disposed of at once. Pointing to a small pewter-pot, he added, that if he would fill it with guineas, he would put him in the way of getting rid of the child for ever, without bloodshed, without murder, and almost without risk of any sort. Urged by his necessitous circumstances, and tempted by the splendid bait thus offered to his cupidity, his companion caught easily at the suggestion, and called upon the boatman to explain his plan. Thus encouraged, Gunthorpe observed, that nothing would be so easy as to take the child out with him in the boat any day that it threatened to blow hard, deluding the nurse, who was a simple-minded woman, with some plausible story, and a promise of immediate return ; when he would make for the other side of the Isle of Wight, would run ashore, jump out, and turn the boat adrift with her sail set, so as to carry her out to sea. “ If she founders, as ten to one she will,” added the proposer of this atrocious scheme, “ why, it’s the wind and the sea have done it, not we ; and if she swims, there’s no harm done by any body. I shall be off immediately afterwards to Newcastle, where I came from ; no-

body will ever see me again in these parts; it will be concluded that I have gone to Davy's-locker as well as the child, no one will ever be suspected, and in due time your honour will walk into the Manor-house estate as a matter of course."

All this appeared so feasible and so safe to Gideon Welbeck, especially as he was to take no active part in the business, and half deluded himself into the belief that this compassing of the child's death was not equivalent to a direct murder, that he pledged himself to fill the pewter-pot with guineas, if it were brought to him in London after the deed had been accomplished. To avoid all suspicion, he returned immediately to the metropolis, shortly after which, Gunthorpe, watching his opportunity, decoyed the child into the boat, amusing the nurse with the assurance that he was merely going across the water, and would bring back her little charge in a quarter of an hour. The nurse's husband returning home soon after the boat had left the shore, shouted and made signals to Gunthorpe to put about, pointing to the sky, to indicate the probability of bad

weather; but while he was thus employed, a sudden and heavy storm of rain rendered the little bark invisible; Gunthorpe, who was an expert seaman, took advantage of his movements being thus effectually shrouded, ran over to the island, jumped ashore, and set the boat afloat again, with her sail so fixed as that the wind, which was momentarily increasing, must inevitably carry her out to sea. From that day nothing more was ever heard upon the Hampshire coast, either of the boat, or those who were on board it. Nettle-top and his wife stated all that they knew of the occurrence; as the storm came on suddenly and heavily, and continued for some time, it was concluded that the boat having been upset by some unfortunate accident, both Gunthorpe and the child had been drowned; and as there was not the smallest suspicion of foul play, and no one to contest the claim of the next legal heir, Gideon Welbeck succeeded in due time to the possession of the Manor-house estate.

But the hapless orphan was not destined to fall a victim to the villains who had thus plotted its destruction. Fortunately for his preser-

vation, the sail was soon blown away by the violence of the wind, and his little ark, though it was driven a considerable way out to sea, still swam upon the troubled waters: Gunthorpe, not knowing how long he himself might be compelled to remain on board, had put some water and provisions in the boat, which afforded sustenance to the child, who crept under the half-deck for shelter, and thus alternately sleeping and waking, and crying itself to sleep again, was at length, after the lapse of a night and day, picked up at sea by a frigate, commanded by Captain Tenby, then under orders to proceed to Canada with all possible dispatch. The child could only speak enough to declare that its name was Henry, and lisp a few words, which were insufficient to afford any clue to its place of residence, the name of its parents, or the cause of its being thus driven out to sea without any companion. Captain Tenby, therefore, bestowed upon him the surname of Melcomb, for no other reason than because he had lately visited that town, which was his birth-place. The singular circumstances under which the foundling was thus preserved, as well as the remarkable

beauty of the boy, deeply interested the Captain, who had no alternative but to carry on his unexpected godsend to Canada. During the voyage the child grew upon his affections, and subsequently took such a firm hold of his heart, that having no family of his own, he adopted and educated him, and finally left him a portion of his fortune as we have already stated.

Though he had not the smallest wish to part with his infant prize, Captain Tenby thought it his duty to have an advertisement inserted in some of the English papers, stating the circumstances under which he had been found, in order that he might be reclaimed by his proper parents, if he possessed any. His first orders to this effect miscarried, the vessel that bore them being captured by the enemy; delays occasioned by professional duty intervened, and it was thus two years before his agent in London procured the advertisement to be inserted, which he did not think it necessary to renew more than once. It met the eye of only one individual who took any interest in the statement, but this one was Gideon Wel-

beck ! From that moment he was racked with a thousand contending agonies. The pangs of remorse that had already begun to tear his heart, received some little alleviation from the hope thus afforded him of his not being a murderer ; but if the child survived, it might live to reclaim its patrimony, to strip him of all that he had usurped, to bring him to public shame and punishment, to brand his children with poverty and ignominy. If he were, indeed, a murderer, he was doomed to eternal punishment in the next world ; if he were not, he was hourly threatened with exposure and ruin in this. This was the fearful and incessant struggle that had shattered his mind to pieces, and occasionally shaken down his reason from her throne ; and these were the misgivings and terrors that led him every day to pore over the advertisements in the newspaper with such a trembling anxiety, wishing, and at the same time dreading, to encounter some fresh statement that might relieve him from the almost intolerable agony of suspense. To these manifold sources of disquiet, were added perpetual fears of Gunthorpe's treachery. Welbeck had

sought a miserable solace in the accumulation of riches, and the prospect of aggrandizing his family ; his signal failure, as to any diminution of his misery, his bitterness of heart, and the curse, which, in the exasperation of disappointment, he had pronounced upon his son, we have already recorded. Many vices had he tried, and all had entailed upon his head their own remorseful punishment;—he had practised but one virtue, that of an inflexible integrity in the discharge of his magisterial duties, and this one had not disappointed him. It was an Oasis in the desert of his life, the only sweet drop in the bitter cup of his existence.

Barak Gunthorpe, after he had received in London the promised reward of his villany, and which, according to his own anticipations, was to render him rich and happy for life, had been strictly enjoined by Welbeck to depart immediately for Newcastle. Wishing, however, to have a little sailor's enjoyment before he left London, he betook himself to a favourite haunt at Wapping, where he was robbed of his ill-gotten store by some of the loose women with whom he associated, and being picked up in a state of in-

toxication by a press-gang, was sent on board the Tender, and transferred to a King's ship bound to Canada. Some time after his arrival, he was drafted on board the frigate commanded by Captain Tenby, where, to his infinite surprise, he saw the child whom he had attempted to destroy, and learnt at the same time, from some of the crew, all the particulars of his being picked up at sea. Believing that he was liable to severe, perhaps to capital punishment for the attempt he had made, although it had not fully succeeded, he was very glad that the child did not recognise him, and for his own sake observed a profound silence upon all that had occurred. Having received a somewhat better education than the other men, he was in time made a mate or clerk to the purser, a situation which, notwithstanding frequent punishments for drunkenness he managed to retain for several years, during which time he had constant opportunities of seeing Henry, who resided a good deal on board, when the frigate was in port or stationed off the coast. Thus he continued until the vessel was ordered to the East Indies, where the Captain died, Gunthorpe, however, still

remaining upon that distant station without any means or prospect of returning to Europe. During this time he had written several letters to Welbeck, desiring him to procure his discharge, and send him out money; missives which had multiplied the terrors and sufferings of the party to whom they were addressed, though he was too cautious ever to reply to them. Receiving no answer to his applications, Gunthorpe at length ceased to write, and Welbeck, gladly concluding from his silence that the man was dead, was the more startled and aghast when so fearful an apparition presented itself before him in the hall of his own house, and whispered in his ear, the appalling name of Barak Gunthorpe.

CHAPTER X.

Open those long shut lips, and strike mine ears
With music more harmonious than the spheres
Yield in their heavenly motions : and if ever
A true submission for a crime acknowledged
May find a gracious hearing, teach your tongue,
In the first sweet articulate sound it utters,
To sign my wished-for pardon."

THE BONDMAN.

CALM and philosophical as was Henry's usual temperament, and utterly indifferent as he was to riches and grandeur, he could not listen to a recital so strange and interesting in its nature, and which promised to effect such a total alteration in his prospects, without being deeply moved. His predominant source of pleasurable emotion was the reflection that, if his claims to the Manor-house estate should be established, Emily, so far from experiencing

any reverse of fortune, or expulsion from her home, might still remain mistress of the mansion, confirming at once her happiness and his own by their marriage; a measure which, he flattered himself, they both equally desired, although, until the present moment, there had been so little hope of ever realizing their mutual wishes. The most painful feeling that Gunthorpe's intelligence had excited, was the consideration of the disgrace, ejection, and compulsory restitution which might fall upon Welbeck, for whom, in the forgiving charity of his generous nature, he could not help feeling beforehand a deep commiseration, notwithstanding his atrocious design against his life, and his long usurpation of his estate and fortune. All, however, whether of a gratifying or displeasing nature, depended upon the truth of Gunthorpe's statement, which he was not prepared to admit, conclusive as it might appear, without farther and most rigorous scrutiny. His close inquiries, however, with the convincing answers they elicited, tended gradually to remove from his mind every possibility of doubt. His informant, mentioning a

peculiar mark upon one of Henry's shoulders, referred to old Nettletop or his wife, should either of them be still living, in confirmation of the fact, that the infant of which they had charge bore a similar impression. The clothes and ornamented coral which he wore at the time of his exposure, as well as the boat in which he was turned adrift, were so minutely described, and tallied so exactly with the information which he himself remembered to have often received from Captain Tenby,—the whole detail of direct and circumstantial evidence was so consistent, clear, and irrefragable, that he remained under the perfect conviction of his being the rightful owner of the Manor-house estate, and entitled, as such, to all the rents of his long minority.

Satisfied upon this point—and he was one of those whose conscience is so delicate that they always argue against, rather than in favour of themselves, he again gave his hand to Gunthorpe, in token of his full and free forgiveness, and assuring him that he should be abundantly rewarded for his intelligence, he took his address at Southampton, and dismissed him

from the prison, cautioning him not to breathe a syllable of what had occurred, and to live as secluded as possible, lest he should be recognised and brought into trouble. Again left to his own meditations, Henry had leisure to reflect upon this singular alteration in his destiny, and upon the measures which it would be most expedient to take for the recovery of his own rights, with the least possible injury to the feelings of others. Welbeck, he thought it not unlikely, rendered desperate by the imminency of his danger, might indignantly deny the whole statement of his accomplice, and drive him to the necessity of legal proceedings, for which he was totally unprovided with funds. If he could have access to him or to Emily, some compromise might, perhaps, be arranged; but, unfortunately, in the midst of all the golden visions which Gunthorpe had so suddenly conjured up, he was imprisoned for a heavy debt, had only a few guineas in his pocket, and did not know where to apply for pecuniary aid, unless to Penguin or Mrs. Tenby, upon each of whom he considered himself to have some sort of claim.

The individuals mentioned were at that moment sitting in discussion together upon his case, and both found themselves to be most unluckily circumstanced. It is really astonishing what benevolent actions people would do if they followed their alleged inclinations, and did not rather choose to be governed by their real ones. Mrs. Tenby, for instance, if we may credit her own averment, would have been delighted to assist in liberating Henry, her regard for whom no one could for a moment question, but that, when she reflected how he had suffered himself to be wheedled and fooled out of the whole of his ready money in a few months, she thought it right to let him lie in prison and bite the bridle, that it might operate as a salutary lesson for his future conduct. Penguin, too, would have been truly gratified to liberate Henry, whose claim upon him to a certain extent, and under all the circumstances of the case, he was quite prepared to admit ; but upon first learning his wife's infamous conduct, he had sworn never to pay any of her debts, and having always been a conscientious man, he could not think of violating so solemn an asseveration.

With this determination the parties separated, having both pointedly condemned Henry's imprudence, and paid one another several well-turned compliments upon their own discretion, uprightness, and strict regard to truth, duty, and principle !

The prisoner would, indeed, have found some difficulty in devising the means of extrication, had he not at this juncture received a most seasonable visit from Enoch Clayton, the young American friend whom he had liberated from the Fleet-prison, and who, having received his expected remittances from his own country, hastened into Hampshire to cancel his debt with Henry, and renew the expression of his gratitude. Not less grieved than astonished at learning his imprisonment, he lost not a moment in flying to Southampton, where he enjoyed the inexpressible satisfaction of returning the service he had received by setting his friend at liberty.

Previously to this most opportune arrival, Henry had been arranging in his own mind a scheme whereby the restoration of his rights, and the accomplishment, as he trusted, of his

permanent happiness, might be effected, without any public exposure of Welbeck, or any of the pain and disgrace which such an occurrence must inevitably entail upon Emily. Animated with these benevolent views, he employed the first moments of his freedom in proceeding to the Manor-house, where he learnt that Welbeck was confined to his bed by illness, and that his daughter, in close attendance upon him, had desired she might not be interrupted by any visitors. Upon his stating, however, that he had matter of the most urgent and important nature to communicate to her, old Wiverley, undertaking to procure him an interview unknown to the justice, who had strictly forbidden his being received, inducted him to the parlour, where he was shortly joined by Emily, whose eyes, though they betrayed that she had lately been weeping, were lighted up with a gleam of pleasure, as she exclaimed, “ I am glad—delighted to see you again at liberty, Mr. Melcomb ! I have a full confidence in your innocence of all the charges that have been brought against you ; you will ever possess the esteem, the regard, the gra-

itude, that are due to you for——Oh, Sir! how shall I ever sufficiently thank you for your brave, your magnanimous conduct in the Forest, when I was left exposed to that terrible wild beast? Indeed, indeed, Sir, my heart thanks you; it will never forget you: but I implore you to recollect that our interviews are forbidden. My poor father is already distressingly ill, I must not irritate him by disobedience; nothing, nothing in the world but my duty to him would lay me under the painful necessity of declaring that I must not follow my own—that I ought not, cannot listen to the communication you have to make!”

“But, if your filial duty imperatively demands that you should hear me; if the character, the preservation of your father, if his happiness, and yours, and mine, entirely depend—which I can most solemnly assure you to be the fact—upon the important statement that I am now compelled to make, you will not, I am confident, deny me a patient hearing. You are agitated, Miss Welbeck: I beseech you to be composed, to dismiss every apprehension. I may bear strange and heavy tidings,

but I come, nevertheless, as the messenger of peace, consolation, and good-will. It is my painful duty to acquaint you with facts that may lacerate, may harrow your feelings in the acutest manner ; and I therefore hasten to apprise you beforehand, that I bring balm and healing for the wounds I am necessitated to inflict ; that if my proposition be entertained, nothing of what I am now about to communicate need ever transpire, that no alterations of any sort will be requisite, but that peace of mind may probably be restored to your father, while your happiness and mine, if my hopes do not deceive me, may be ensured for life. Bear this in mind, I implore you, while you listen, discarding all alarm, and as far as possible every unpleasant feeling, in the sure confidence that these, my previous pledges, shall be fully redeemed, and that the calamity which, at the first view, may seem to threaten both your father and yourself, may, by your and his co-operation, be eventually converted into a blessing for all parties.”

After thus preparing his auditress for the startling communication he was about to make,

and for the painful trial to which it might expose her, he proceeded to recite the whole of Gunthorpe's statement, recapitulating all the minute circumstances of corroboration, which left not a shadow of doubt upon his own mind of his being the rightful heir of the late Cyril Welbeck, and entitled, as such, to the Manor-house estate. "And now, Miss Welbeck," continued Henry, "having gone through this distressing part of my recital, to which I shall never again make the most remote allusion, I would humbly submit to your consideration my scheme for hushing up the whole affair, and extracting solace and joy out of these apparent elements of misery. If I might flatter myself with the belief that I am not indifferent to you, that you would have sufficient confidence in me to honour me with your hand, and make me the guardian of your happiness for life, I should apprehend little difficulty in obtaining your father's consent to our marriage. As a pauper and an unknown foundling, it is not strange that he should object to me for a son-in-law; but I shall now possess the means of enabling you to move in a becoming sphere, and

I am no longer an outcast as to kindred, but of the same family as himself, although our relationship is a distant one. If he yield to my wishes, nothing whatever need transpire. In giving me his daughter, he will have made ample atonement for all the wrongs he may have done me; and when I assume the name of Welbeck, to which I am entitled, it will naturally be concluded that it was one of the conditions upon which he consented to the marriage, and will thus excite neither surprise nor inquiry. We may live together in the Manor-house as one family; I shall be happy to divide with you the duty of filial attention, of endeavouring to make your father's future years better and happier than those that are past; and when, in the course of time, he shall be removed from among us, it may appear that I have succeeded to the estate as the husband of his daughter—for he is well known to have disinherited your brother Godfrey, and thus no exposure or humiliation will be inflicted upon your father, no consequent misery of feeling will be entailed upon yourself, and no slur or ignominy will be cast upon our family name, of which I myself have now a

right to become jealous ; and am therefore consulting my own feelings not less than yours and Mr Welbeck's, by the arrangement I propose. You must allow me one more observation. Let it be distinctly understood, that I come not to extort a consent to my proposition under any threat of consequences ; I dictate nothing ; I prescribe nothing ; I present myself as a humble suitor, and happy indeed shall I be if, in obtaining the sole object of my wishes, I can spare the feelings, and uphold the respectability of the family into which I solicit an admission."

During this agitating recital, Emily had at times been so powerfully affected as to be on the point of fainting away, and more than once was Henry compelled to suspend his narrative, that, by his tender attentions, he might encourage and console her. "Let me know all ; let me know the worst," she repeatedly exclaimed, as she urged him to resume ; "I have long been tortured with misgivings and suspicions ; anything is better than suspense. Go on, go on ! I have courage to hear it all !" When he had concluded, however, and had developed the full extent of his benevolent scheme she was so

moved and overcome that she burst into tears and sobbed audibly. As soon as she could recover herself, she held out her hand to Henry, exclaiming at the same time in a voice that trembled with tenderness and deep emotion, "Oh, Mr. Melcomb! I was ever too sensitive, too ingenuous, too little accustomed to pleasure of any sort, to be able to conceal the delight that I always found in your society, and I fear, therefore, that I have long since betrayed the secret of my soul. If this was the case before, what must be my feelings now, after the truly considerate, the delicate, the noble and generous proposal you have just made! Oh! that you could read my heart, that you might see how truly, how gratefully it is yours!"

"Enough, enough! I read it in your affectionate and confiding looks!" cried Henry, pressing to his lips the hand which he had still retained.

"But my father, my poor father!" said the blushing and confused Emily; "every thing must be made dependent upon his consent, though of that there can now be little doubt. Alas! this will be a trying day for him. He has been seriously ill, and sadly wandering in

his faculties ever since the morning when the strange man, whom I now discover to have been Barak Gunthorpe, was closeted with him in the porch-room. Such have been my fears for the permanent sanity of his mind, that, with the consent of his medical attendant, I am about to hazard the experiment of attempting to recall him to his self-possession by powerfully exciting his feelings. This I hope to accomplish by effecting his reconciliation with my unfortunate brother, whose melancholy story you have probably heard. He is now in the house for this purpose, and I must hasten to execute my plan."

"But my own, my dearest Emily—for such I hope I may now be allowed to call you," said Henry—"can you not stay with me a few minutes longer? I have much, much to say."

"Not now, not now. Godfrey is waiting, and I have been too long absent from my father. I dread to think of what I have to perform in communicating to him the statement of the wretched Gunthorpe. But it must—it must be done, and I will not flinch from my duty, distressing as it may be. I need not now give you permission to repeat your visit, for it is we who

child, let me see thee, let me embrace thee, for thou art now the only comfort left to me upon earth."

"Say not so, my dearest father, I trust that there are many joys, and many, many years in reserve for you, much happier than those you have latterly experienced. Cheer up! cheer up! let us all rejoice together, for I have great and wonderful tidings to tell you, tidings which, while they promise a perpetual peace to our hearts, should fill them with everlasting gratitude to God."

In this strain did she continue for a brief space, endeavouring to inspire her father with a perfect confidence that all his dangers and troubles were over, before she would venture to communicate her intelligence; and then cautiously and gradually, not without frequently renewed assurances of forgiveness, solace, and happiness to all parties, did she proceed to relate what she had heard. With the true delicacy and tact of a woman and a daughter, she made not the most remote allusion to her father's participation in the meditated atrocity, but told her story as if she herself believed it to have

been devised and executed by Gunthorpe alone. As soon as she began to mention this man's name, Welbeck sat suddenly up in the bed, and riveting his distended, wild-looking eyes upon his daughter, listened to her with open mouth and flushed features, while his hands rapidly, though involuntarily, opened and shut in the intense eagerness of his expectation. Not once did he attempt to interrupt her narrative, but as his conscience smote him, as he saw, in spite of her affectionate reserve and suppression of the fact, that his guilt had been divulged, his face became frightfully convulsed, he hid it in his hands, he buried it in the pillow, he shuddered, and endeavouring to shrink into himself, uttered the most appalling groans in the deep agony of his spirit.

When, however, Emily proceeded to state how Henry had been saved and picked up at sea, and that he was the identical Henry Melcomb, from whose society her father had lately derived so much pleasure, Welbeck's debility seemed instantaneously to have left him, he sprang upon his knees, clasped his hands together, and cried aloud, in a vehement and im-

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passioned voice, "Then I am not a murderer! Thank God! thank God! thank God! Ha! ha! ha! ha!" and he fell back upon his pillow, struggling with the hysterical violence of his emotions.

This shattering attack again producing a temporary alienation of his mind, he talked for some time wildly and incoherently, imagining himself to be publicly arraigned for murder, and imploring abjectly and with tears the mercy of his judge. Emily suffered him to weep without interruption, knowing by experience that it generally soothed his agitation; nor was she now mistaken, for he shortly became more calm, and after slowly communing with his thoughts, as if to recover his recollection, he exclaimed, with a look and tone of incertitude—"Saved! saved! did not some one tell me that the boy was saved?"

"Yes, he *is* saved! we are all saved, all forgiven, all happy!" cried Emily, tenderly embracing her father, at whose instance she then recapitulated the circumstances of Henry's preservation, together with the whole train of minute and irrefutable evidence that established

his identity, Welbeck repeatedly exclaiming during the recital, "The finger of Heaven! the finger of Heaven! It is manifest, indisputable! I acknowledge and confess all! Yes, yes," he ejaculated, when she had concluded this portion of her statement, "Providence has snatched him from the stormy deep, and fostered him, and sent him hither, on purpose that I might be brought to shame and disgrace. But I care not, I care not, for I am not a murderer. The demon who has so long been sitting on my heart, tearing, and mangling, and devouring it piecemeal, has been driven away. I feel that he is gone; my bosom shall no longer be a nest for scorpions. Kiss me, my child, kiss me; thy father is not quite so guilty a wretch as he thought himself. But where is Henry, where is he, that I may throw myself at his feet, acknowledge my transgressions, tender him full restitution, and implore his pardon?"

"He will not have restitution, he does not require pardon," cried the blushing and weeping Emily; "he comes as a suitor for your favour, and solicits from you only one poor boon, which, worthless and utterly inadequate

as it is, the generous man is willing to receive as a full acquittance of all that you may owe him,—as an act of pardon and oblivion for the past, a pledge of friendship, concord, security, and happiness for the future.”

She now detailed Henry’s proposal for making the restoration of his rights and paternal name appear to emanate from her father as a condition of the marriage with his daughter, and as a certain means of preserving Welbeck himself from all shame and exposure. Confessing that she had already bestowed her heart upon Henry, she besought him to consent to this arrangement, drawing a glowing picture of the felicity she hoped to enjoy, when herself and Henry, living under the same roof with their common father, might share the duty and the pleasure of ministering to his comfort, and restoring his long-lost peace of mind.”

“Generous, glorious, god-like boy!” was all that Welbeck could for some time articulate. “Consent!” he at length continued, “it is not for me to consent, but to implore, to supplicate, to pray him upon my knees to carry into execution what his benevolent, his magnanimous

soul has suggested ! Oh God ! how wonderfully am I spared, and how little have I deserved these mercies !”

“ We may well deserve the favour of Heaven, my dear father, if we repent our misdeeds, and extend to others the forgiveness we have ourselves received. This should be a day of joy and pardon, of peace-making and reconciliation to all parties. Bear this in mind, I implore you : I will leave you now, for you heed me not, nor do I wish to interrupt you while thus devoutly employed.”

Welbeck having sunk down with clasped hands beside the bed, was praying with a passionate but incoherent energy, returning thanks for his own escape, invoking blessings upon Henry, and then wandering into deprecations of the curse that fell upon the head of Cain, the first murderer, to whom he compared himself, and with whose brand and punishment he expected to be visited. Emily softly withdrew from the apartment, hoping that prayer, solitude, and his own reflections, upon the heart-healing intelligence she had conveyed, would do more to tranquillize his mind, than any solace

she might herself suggest to him. Determined, however, not to lose so favourable an opportunity, when his spirit was humbled and softened, for attempting to reconcile him to her brother, she returned, after the lapse of half an hour, Godfrey following her in silence into the apartment, and concealing himself behind a large screen, placed between the door and the bed.

Welbeck was now again lying down, talking to himself aloud, apparently in a mood of tolerable complacency, although his soliloquy was exclamatory and disconnected.

“ I told you, my dear father,” said Emily, taking his hand, as she placed herself beside him, “ that this ought to be a day of pardon to all parties, and now I am come to ask forgiveness for myself in disobeying your positive injunctions, and venturing to speak to you upon the subject of our unhappy Godfrey.”

The very name of his son, associated, as it had long been in Welbeck’s mind, with the bitterness that springs from disappointed hopes and vainly lavished affections, seemed suddenly to have thrown him back into his former state

of passionate excitement, and to have revived all the rancour and fury of his soul.

“ Hah !” he exclaimed, starting up, and stretching out his clenched hands—“ have you dared again to mention to me the wretch whom I have cursed ! His very name stings my ear ! Hear me, child ! hear me !” and he clasped his hands convulsively above his head : “ Once already has my malediction alighted upon him, and now again do I solemnly pronounce——”

“ My father ! my father ! curse me not a second time,” shouted Godfrey, as bursting from his place of concealment, he threw himself upon the bed, when Welbeck, uttering a loud cry of terror and surprise, fell back upon the pillow, overtaken by one of those fits to which he was liable upon any great or sudden emotion. His afflicted children sate beside him, watching his recovery with the most intent anxiety, especially as the present access was of longer duration than usual, but he at length opened his eyes, faintly exclaiming, “ Methought I heard the voice, and saw the face of my poor unfortunate boy !”

“ You did ! you did ! I am here, Sir, here,” cried Godfrey, kneeling before him. “ Your prodigal, but penitent son, is come to throw himself at your feet, to implore your pardon, and to promise an amended life for the future.”

“ Are you indeed my son ?” cried Welbeck, placing his hands upon the shoulders of the kneeling suppliant, and gazing upon his face with an earnest, but bewildered scrutiny:—“ Are you truly, and indeed my own darling boy ; the little blue-eyed Godfrey, on whom I doated so fondly when a child ? Are you the prattling innocent whom I once delighted to dance upon my knee, and to sing to, and play with during the day, and to kiss every night in your cradle before I retired to rest ? Are you the poor, suffering, sick Godfrey, whom I carried in my arms early and late, when you had a fever, and hushed you to sleep, and watched beside you till you awoke again ?”

For a moment or two he remained silent, still poring upon every feature of the face before him, until, as his consciousness returned, and a conviction of Godfrey’s identity became established in his mind, the muscles of his mouth

began to be slightly convulsed, the blood rushed over his countenance, his eyes glistened, he drew two or three deep and gasping inspirations, the tears rolled rapidly down his cheeks, and suddenly clasping and holding Godfrey to his heart, he hung tenderly over him, passionately sobbing, "My child! my child! my child!"

"My father! my dear father!" was all that the son could articulate, when his voice was choked by his emotions, as he wept in his parent's bosom. Emily, utterly overcome by this touching scene, sobbed aloud, and tried in vain to wipe away the delicious tears of sympathy, joy, and deep tenderness, which streamed so copiously from her eyes, as to prevent her discerning her father and her brother, while they remained thus fondly locked together in the embrace of reconciliation.

"Yes!" exclaimed Welbeck, at length disengaging himself from his son, and surveying him with a look of paternal fondness, "I see it, I feel it now;—you are very pale, and very thin, but you are still my own, own Godfrey. There are your dear mother's blue eyes; there—" At the recollection of his deceased

wife, his voice broke, the tears gushed afresh from his eyes, he was unable to proceed, but after giving a free vent to his emotions, he recovered himself, and stretching both his hands upwards, passionately exclaimed, "Oh, my departed Sarah,—now a saint in Heaven! had I followed your pure and holy counsels, I should never have deviated into sin and misery, never have known the racking remorse of the past, nor the deep anguish of my present humiliation. Look down upon your guilty and wretched husband; intercede for me at the Throne of Mercy, and join with me in prayer, that this dizzy ferment of my brain may not end in madness, for I fear that I am already sometimes bewildered and wandering in my mind. These are your children; hover over them, and protect them; for their father, even if he preserve his wits, is a criminal, not fit to be their guardian, and still less their guide!"

Deeply affected as were both Emily and Godfrey by this fervent invocation of their mother, they dried up their tears, devoting all their efforts to the consolation of their remain-

ing parent, whom they again affectionately embraced, imploring him not to agitate himself with unavailing regret for the past, but to look forward with hope, confidence, and gratitude. “ I should not have ventured into your presence, nor have presumed to implore your pardon,” said Godfrey, anxious that his father should not any longer dwell upon the recollection of such painful subjects—“ unless I could present myself before you in a less culpable light than that in which you have lately viewed me. You will, I am sure, share in my delight, when I tell you that the villains who fabricated a charge of forgery against me, have been convicted of a conspiracy ; and that I have obtained a full and total annulment of the marriage with the profligate woman, who, under a feigned name, inveigled me into the contract. The mischief of my follies and irregularities is thus, in a considerable degree, remedied ; the good that may be derived from them in the way of warning remains, I trust, to be evinced in an amended life, and an avoidance of all future reproach. I have suffered too acutely not to

be sincere in my resolution of reform, and it is upon this ground that I most earnestly and humbly implore your forgiveness."

"Take it freely, my son, and my blessing with it; if a blessing from such a wretch as I am, may do thee good. Embrace me, Godfrey—again, again—bless thee! bless thee, my poor boy! Monster, that I am! did I not curse thee? I must have been mad when I did it. Was it for a hoary transgressor like me to call for vengeance upon a poor misguided youth? This, too, must be added to the catalogue of my offences. Forgive me! forgive me, O God!"

"Forgiveness and blessings seem already to be showered upon all our heads," said Emily. "Godfrey, cleared of the aspersions that were cast upon him, liberated from his disreputable wife, and promising to be a wiser and a happier man for the future, is restored to your favour and affections. I, myself, am about to be united to the most amiable of mankind and the only being in the world, who, in securing my happiness, could consolidate that of my father and my brother. And you, my dear Sir, relieved

from all those remorseful apprehensions that have saddened your latter days, and continuing to reside at the Manor-house, will, in addition to the domestic enjoyments which it will be the study of myself and Godfrey to provide for you, be solaced with the society and attentions of our generous Henry, in whose company you have already found a pleasure that must have attached him to your heart."

"It is too much! It is too much!" cried Welbeck. "Such a flood of joy is more than I deserve, more than I can bear: my head is already confused and giddy. Kneel with me, my dear children, while my faculties are still spared, and let us all return thanks for the undeserved mercies—unmerited, at least, by me—which Heaven has vouchsafed to shower upon us."

CONCLUSION.

These and thy virtue
Keep thy fame ever odoriferous !
While the great, proud, rich, undeserving man,
Alive, stinks in his vices, and being vanished,
The golden calf that was an idol, decked
With marble pillars, jet, and porphyry,
Shall quickly, both in bone and name consume,
Though wrapt in lead, spice, searcloth, and perfume.

MASSINGFR.

THE joy of unexpected deliverance from any long impending danger or calamity, is more trying to the faculties than would be the actual occurrence of the anticipated visitation, a truth which Welbeck was now destined to exemplify, for during the remainder of this most anxious day he was in a state of total delirium. Being again restored to his proper senses by a night's repose, he was permitted, at his own urgent request, to have an interview with Henry. It

proved a deeply affecting one to both parties ; for the sick man, in the utter prostration of his mind, confessed his guilt with the most passionate expressions of self-accusing penitence and remorse, and implored forgiveness in such agony of soul, that his visitant, who could hardly prevent the grey-headed old man from kneeling at his feet, was scarcely less distressed than the suppliant himself. Taking his hand, however, and laying it upon his heart, Henry solemnly pronounced his forgiveness and oblivion of the past, again pledging himself to the full performance of all that he had stated to Emily, and urging, in the kindest and most delicate manner, every topic of consolation that was likely to soothe the mind of his companion. Fairly at a loss for words to express his sense of all this unparalleled forbearance and generosity, Welbeck could only weep his gratitude ; but when his companion arose to depart, the fear that some new turn of fate might prevent the realization of all these beatific visions, again restored to him his speech, and with an eager impatience, he implored Henry not to lose time in accomplishing the great and

glorious work on which their common happiness depended, but to name an early day for the marriage. Upon this point, however anxious Henry might be to meet the wishes of his future father-in-law, he would not presume to dictate, leaving that, and every other matter of detail, to be arranged between Emily and her parent.

No sooner had Henry taken his departure, than Welbeck called impatiently for his boy, his beloved Godfrey. In the oscillation of his disordered mind, his feelings swung rapidly from one extremity to another, and he was now as doating in his restored fondness for his son, as he had lately been rancorous and implacable in his aversion. It seemed as if he wished to lavish upon him at once all the long arrears of his interrupted love; he could scarcely bear him to be out of his sight; he dwelt frequently, and seldom without tears, as he embraced him afresh, upon his paleness, his altered looks, and the lameness that still compelled him to go upon crutches; and the presence of the son certainly seemed to have a beneficial effect in preserving the sanity of the

father, if that, indeed, can be called sanity which now began to degenerate into a fond, maudlin imbecility. Under these circumstances, Godfrey found no difficulty in procuring his consent to his marriage with Mary Boulderson. “*My consent!*” cried the old man, “what right have I to grant or to withhold it? My poor boy! I have nothing to leave you; no estate, no fortune, nothing but my blessing, for all that I possess belongs to Henry. Apply not then to me, but to the magnanimous friend upon whom we are all dependant.”

When informed that Henry was most anxious for the match in question, Welbeck became equally solicitous for its completion, appearing to be particularly gratified at the thought that his son and daughter might now be married on the same day. Sanctioned in his choice by his father’s consent; cleared in his character; once more a single man, and able to explain all that had appeared equivocal or suspicious in his conduct, more especially as to the mysterious meetings with his sister in the Forest, Godfrey hurried in search of his beloved Mary, to relate the altered circumstances in which he

was now placed, and make atonement for his former vacillation, by an immediate offer of his hand.

At this period Lawrence Boulderson had accomplished that which he had sworn to perform, he had run ashore without loss the remainder of the Longsplice's cargo, an event which his daughter had been expecting with the most intense anxiety, since his final abandonment of the free-trade was to be the result of his success in this enterprise. Having accomplished this object, he made an immediate arrangement with one of his partners for taking his remaining share of the smuggling stock, as he was now about to abandon the free-trade; and when Godfrey arrived at the Grange-farm, he found both the father and daughter in busy preparation for their early removal to Southampton.

After frankly stating to Mary every particular of his own wild and foolish career, the occasion of his secret meetings with Emily, his imprudent marriage, and the alternate hopes and fears that imparted to his conduct such an appearance of inconsistency, Godfrey added,

“ And now, Mary, having thus unreservedly told you my whole history, it is right to apprise you, that, although I am the only son of Gideon Welbeck, and he may approve the object of my choice when I solicit you to become my wife, you will, if you marry me, in all probability have a pauper for your husband. My father has revoked the curse he pronounced against me, nay, he is fully reconciled ; and yet, from peculiar circumstances, it is not likely that he can ever benefit me by his will. I am finally and irrevocably disinherited. That I may be assisted by Emily or by her husband is not improbable ; but I am a mere dependant on their bounty. Unfortunately, I am not only likely to be a pauper, but a cripple for life ; for in my too hasty removal from Hordle Cliff, and subsequently from the Farm, I again displaced one of the bones, although I was not aware of it. My concealment in the Forest prevented any inspection of my leg until the evil was beyond remedy ; and I am now told that I must not expect ever to throw away my crutches. If you will take compassion on me, Mary, and receive me for your husband, penni-

less and lame, but penitent and reformed, I will endeavour, by a respectable, and, I hope, an useful course of life hereafter, to prove myself worthy your love, and to make some atonement to society for the errors of my past career."

"There is my hand," said Mary, extending it to him with a look and tone of frank, honest delight; "but I would not give it you, if I thought you would ever swerve from this honourable resolution. I always knew you to be generous, brave, and accomplished; and now that you have explained the seeming mystery of your actions, and accounted for that wavering and irresolution which excited at the time my contempt, I disdain to conceal—Psha!—surely George, (I shall never be able to call you Godfrey,) surely you must long ago have discovered my partiality, and I am no silly coquet to deny it now. Honesty in word and action, is my motto. A pauper! Have you not talents which, by the assistance of your friends—now not ashamed to acknowledge you, may always command the means of honourable subsistence; and has not my father declared that he has enough for us all? A cripple! I hope your fears are groundless; but should they be rea-

lized—O George! George! will not that very circumstance constitute your best title to my hand and heart? Can I ever be wearied of nursing you; can I ever contemplate your misfortune without additional gratitude and love, when I reflect that it was entailed upon you by your brave and generous interference to protect my father?—Here he comes, and I think I may venture to promise that he will not like you the less for having the stronger claim upon his friendship.”

“Well, lad, what cheer? what cheer?” cried the Captain, saluting him with his usual rough and cordial greeting. “What!” he indignantly continued, when Mary stated her lover’s apprehensions—“Do you fancy I agreed to have you because you were old Welbeck’s son? If you think so, you think a lie! Don’t care a rope’s-end about his fortune, nor yours neither!—’cause why?—got enough of my own to keep us all right and tight. Polly cast you off, ’cause you’re likely to be lopsided for life, and that too from a bit of lead you took in your own body when it was meant for mine! Start my timbers! if she did, I’d cast her off, and never take her in tow again! Poll’s not a sneaking, greedy, snivelling,

lying, false-hearted slut, but a brave, honest girl: and as for Larry Boulderson, when a man has once done me a good turn, I'am always willing to go through fire and water to serve him!—Vast there, vast! I want none of your thanks; I hate jaw and palaver, and don't like to see folks standing shilly-shally, when every thing's settled,—'cause why?—didn't like it myself when I was a young one; so the sooner you're spliced to Polly, why the better I shall be pleased, and so will you, I warrant."

All parties being thus equally solicitous to expedite the ceremony, Thaxted and its vicinity were astounded by the intelligence that Emily Welbeck and Henry Melcomb, who was thenceforward to take the name of his wife, were shortly to be married in the parish church; that on the same day Godfrey Welbeck was to be united to Mary Boulderson, the daughter of "the Capt'n;" and most astonishing of all, that his Worship, Justice Welbeck, who was now getting better in his health, perfectly approving the marriage both of his son and of his daughter, meant to sanction the double ceremony by his presence. The amaze-

ment, the conjectures, the whisperings, the surmises, the gossipings, and the curiosity which this news excited throughout the whole rural district of Thaxted, must be left to the imagination of the reader, for they utterly transcend all power of description. Mr. Penguin, with whom Henry had sought a reconciliation immediately after his liberation from prison, had now become prodigiously intimate with his "young Domine," as he again familiarly termed him, and running about from house to house, circulated the marvellous tidings in all directions, clearing his friend from the aspersions that had been heaped upon him, extolling him to the skies as a phoenix of perfection, and again reclaiming that distant consanguinity between them, which he had latterly been so forward to deny, and for which, in point of fact, there was no ground whatever.

On the morning of the ceremony, Thaxted church was so thronged with visitants, that it was not without difficulty the nuptial party could make their way to the altar, where they mutually pledged those vows which neither of the four individuals ever found subsequent reason to

repent. Justice Welbeck was present, and notwithstanding the unwonted smiles which on this happy occasion lighted up his haggard features, it was observed by all that his recent illness had sadly altered him, while several prognosticated that it would not be many months before the Manor-house would find a new owner. At his particular request, there was no parade of any sort, every thing being conducted in the most simple and unostentatious manner, so that we have no splendid dresses to record, no festivities to commemorate, no procession to particularise, nothing to state beyond the bare fact, that after the ceremony, Godfrey and Mary set off for Southampton, where it was their purpose to pass the honeymoon, while Henry and Emily took up their permanent abode at the Manor-house.

Never, perhaps, had two such universally interesting marriages been celebrated, on the same morning, in the little church of Thaxted; and scarcely had a fortnight elapsed, when another concourse of curious spectators were assembled in the same sacred building to witness the nuptials of Fanny Frampton and Frank Ringwood.

From the moment when Fanny had first declared her resolution, she had adhered to it with an inflexible firmness, that might have been deemed foreign to her usually sportive, pliable, and apparently volatile temperament. There was, in fact, considerable strength of character, perhaps an almost undue degree of self-will, united with her playfulness of manner and childishness of appearance; so that her parents, finding menaces and entreaties equally inefficacious, were fain to let her follow her own course, warning her, that they would neither recognise the match beforehand, nor ever notice her after it had taken place. By the kind and zealous interference, however, of Doctor and Miss Dotterel—the former of whom, with his usual amiable inconsistency, loudly condemned Fanny's conduct, and yet earnestly strove to propitiate her parents—Mr. Frampton was persuaded to be present at the ceremony, and to give his daughter away, only marking his disapprobation of her nuptials by refusing to bestow upon her any marriage portion. Inexorable to the last, Lady Susan told her, as she set out for the church, that she must never expect to set foot again within Oak-

ham-hall, or to have any farther communication with her mother ; paying herself, at the same time, a few compliments upon the exemplary manner in which she had always discharged the maternal duties, and reproaching her daughter with the consequent aggravation of her ingratitude. Augusta wrote a long letter to her sister, sincerely regretting the degradation she had brought upon herself and her family by her alliance with Farmer Ringwood, declaring that although she herself had a particular objection to Lord Mossdale, and could, therefore, never have married him, (an assertion which we beg leave to discredit,) she thought Fanny's refusal of him a great piece of folly and presumption ; concluding with stating, that as the writer held implicit obedience to parents an imperative duty, she must decline any future communication with the wife of Farmer Ringwood, although she should ever remain, " her affectionate sister, Augusta Frampton."

Mr. Frampton had a much more valid reason than the ostensible one of dissatisfaction at Fanny's marriage, for refusing her a portion. In spite of his great reputed wealth, his finances

were by no means in a condition to authorize an advance of money for this, or for any other purpose. A large estate, which he had formerly purchased with a defective title, had been wrested from him by a decree in the Court of Chancery, after a long and most ruinous suit; an unprincipled agent in the West Indies, had not only materially injured the property entrusted to his management, but finally decamped many thousand pounds in debt to his employer; a succession of unfavourable seasons had considerably reduced Frampton's income: pride, or perhaps the hope of better times, prevented any reduction in his large expenditure; and under these circumstances, a very few years, as might well have been expected, produced an irretrievable derangement of his affairs. His embarrassments could no longer be concealed; Oakham-hall was brought to the hammer, a small house was substituted for the large mansion in London, and his expensive establishment was slowly and most reluctantly reduced, to meet the altered state of his circumstances. Galled, humiliated, stung to the quick by reverses which fell with aggravated force upon a

family so purse-proud and arrogant, the Framp-ton's rendered their misfortunes still more poignant, by refusing to submit to them with a good grace. Subterfuges and expedients of all kinds were resorted to, for the purpose of palliating disasters which could not be altogether denied, and in their efforts to maintain an establishment which, although much reduced, was still incommensurate with their narrow means, they offered to the world the pitiful but scarcely pitiable spectacle of impoverished pride, half starving self, servants, and horses, for the sake of an occasional ostentatious dinner; sacrificing every-day comforts for one or two showy luxuries; surrendering realities in order to keep up appearances; and compelled to be pinching and penurious at home, and to endure all the domestic miseries inseparable from a sordidly conducted household, for the sorry and poor satisfaction of being thought happier and richer than they really were.

As there was little chance, in the humbler sphere they were now compelled to occupy, of realizing the long-desired noble alliance for Augusta, her mother thought proper to disavow

her having ever entertained any such project, treating the whole story as the malicious fabrication of some enemy of the family, and adding, that she desired nothing more, although her own noble connexions might well justify her in seeking a loftier alliance for her daughter, than to see her united to some respectable and worthy commoner, with whom she might share that domestic happiness which she was so eminently qualified to bestow. Modest as was the hint, and reasonable as might be deemed the expectation, the desiderated, respectable, and worthy commoner came not forward; and at the period when this history was written, Miss Frampton still studiously, though now most economically, attentive to the fluctuations of fashion; stately as ever in look and in demeanour, though now, alas! the splendour of her youthful beauty had much faded away, remained unmarried,—a condition which her feelings of bitter disappointment, and the aggravated infirmity of her temper, will, we fear, hardly allow us to term in this instance a state of single blessedness.

Brook-hatch, the residence of Fanny and

Ringwood, was a scene of genuine festivity at the time of their marriage, and remained ever afterwards the abode of perfect domestic happiness. Its mistress, whose girlishness of appearance, and exuberance of spirits were hardly in accordance with the matronly appellation of Mrs. Ringwood, gambolled about the premises, attending to the flowers, the crumpling apples, the ancient dogs, the superannuated horses, the poultry, the dairy, and even the pigs, with a vivacity of delight that seemed to seek nothing but present amusement, although she made it subservient to the graver duties of her new station, becoming in every respect an excellent wife, an admirable manager of her household, and proving in due time, that notwithstanding her apparent volatility, she knew how to take the charge of a young family as well as the most sapient and prosy nurse in all Hampshire. When Ringwood had completed the payment of his father's debts, which he had so honourably undertaken to discharge, his disencumbered income would have allowed him to set up a handsome establishment; but both himself and Fanny had experienced such unalloyed felicity

in their own plain and simple style of living, that they feared to try any experiments with additional servants or equipages, and agreed to persevere in the happy course they had first pursued, leaving the surplus of their fortune to accumulate for their younger children, a set of claimants who promised to be rather numerous. Fanny had made repeated overtures towards a reconciliation with her parents, all of which had met a cold and even a supercilious rejection, but no sooner had she learnt their reverses by the announced sale of Oakham-hall, than disregarding all their unkind injunctions, and following only the dictates of her own affectionate heart, she hurried up to London, threw herself at their feet, and implored forgiveness; while Ringwood, who had accompanied her, made a delicate but most cordial and earnest tender of such pecuniary assistance as his amended circumstances now qualified him to afford. Although Frampton, who was a proud man, declined this offer, he was not unaffected by the kindly and generous spirit that prompted it. A reconciliation ensued, and though Lady Susan, now that she had fallen from her high estate, could

not bear to revisit the neighbourhood of Oakham-hall, Miss Frampton, after the London season was over, frequently accepted Fanny's invitation to pass the autumn at Brook-hatch, in consideration of which hospitality, she liberally conceded to its owner his long-contested title of *Squire* Ringwood. Here she had the supreme pleasure, so long as she remained, of setting the fashions; and here too she most assiduously set her cap at squires, divines, fox-hunters, or whatever "worthy and respectable commoners" fortune threw in her way, all of whom admitted the charms of the stylish and elegant Miss Frampton, though none of them testified the smallest wish to make her change that name.

Gideon Welbeck, as many of his neighbours had anticipated, did not long survive the nuptials of Henry and Emily; his constitution, shattered and weakened by his previous sufferings, never having recovered from the shock of Gunthorpe's apparition. Relieved from the apprehension of human punishment and exposure, he became a prey to spiritual horrors, imagining that the crime he had devised,

although it had never been consummated, would infallibly consign him to eternal perdition. Under this appalling conviction, his disordered fancy conjured up ghastly visions that occasionally drove him to delirium, while his calmer moods degenerated into a fatuous imbecility, during the prevalence of which he called almost incessantly, and with tears of doating, impatient fondness, for his darling son Godfrey. The fearful workings of this mental machinery soon shook to pieces the crazy tenement that contained it, and his death was too desirable a release for himself to justify any deep regret on the part of his friends.

By his will, which his recent disturbed state of mind would not have allowed him to alter, even had he been so disposed, his daughter was constituted his sole and exclusive heiress, so that Henry succeeded to the whole of his vast property, a considerable portion of which, however, he might have fairly claimed as a matter of right. Godfrey's name was not even mentioned, an omission which Henry, with his usual munificence, proposed to rectify by bestowing upon him a handsome share of his

father's fortune. From this, however, he was dissuaded by his own wife as well as by Godfrey's, both of whom represented to him, that as the object of his proposed generosity was infirm of purpose, and had been strongly addicted to gambling, it would be only throwing temptation in his way to give him the command of a large sum of money. At their suggestion, therefore, and with the concurrence of Godfrey himself, who, during his residence at the Grange, had acquired some taste for agricultural pursuits, he purchased for him a beautifully-situated farm, with a comfortable dwelling-house in the immediate vicinity of Southampton, where the lame farmer, by which appellation, he soon came to be distinguished, devoting himself to rural concerns and domestic pursuits, with the occasional relaxation of books, music, and field-sports, in which latter he was enabled to participate by the assistance of a poney, contrived to enjoy existence in spite of the constant companionship of his crutches. More than once, indeed, when his old unsettled or romantic spirit came over him, he would yearn for some indiscreet change, or propose

to embark in some hazardous speculation, from which the superior good sense of his wife invariably succeeded in reclaiming him ; so that, if he finally redeemed his pledge of becoming a steady family man, and an useful member of society, he was perhaps not less indebted to her than to himself for this most beneficial change. Had any one who compared his former wild and dissolute career with the respectability of his present life, inquired of Mary by what magic she had wrought this marvellous improvement, she might truly have replied, in the well-known words of the Marechalle d'Ancre, when accused of having obtained an undue command over the Queen-mother of France by means of sorcery, " I have used no other witchcraft than that influence which a strong mind will ever possess over a weak one."

In a small parlour of this farm, which Mary appropriated to her father as his smoking-room, the old man might frequently be seen sitting by the fire, or at the open window, according to the season, with two fair, curly-headed, beautiful grandchildren climbing up his knees,

and forming a group that forcibly recalled Cipriani's picture of Cupids sporting with a Lion; while their infant prattle contrasted strikingly with the gruff voice of the grandsire, as in words of menace, though with a look of the most affectionate tenderness, he growled out now and then, "Hallo! 'vast there, you youngsters! Start my timbers! if you touch my pipe, I'll sarve it out to you—give you a taste of the rope's-end; so down with you, Larry; down, I say, Poll!"—His favourite haunt when he left home was the bow-windowed room of a public-house beside the Quay at Southampton, where, until very lately, the original from whom we have drawn our portrait, might be seen three or four days in the week, sipping his strong punch, plying his inseparable meerschaum, and gazing complacently down the water. Hence, after emptying his bowl, he would usually sally forth to the Quay, take his stand against the old capstan, criticise the sailing of every vessel that passed up or down Southampton-Water, and as he became gradually surrounded with a little knot of eager listeners, it was here that he loved to

crack of the immense sums for which he had been exchequered; of the crops that he had formerly worked in his lucky little lugger the "Ax' about!" of the money he had made, and the enterprizes he had achieved, in his celebrated fast-sailing cutter the Longsplice; of the services rendered to him by his sagacious black mastiff Belzebub; and the hair-breadth escapes for which he was indebted to the fleetness of his favourite mare, who, now that she was past labour, was turned out to graze upon his son-in-law's farm, where a day seldom elapsed without her being visited and caressed by her old master. The Captain, for by this epithet he still continued to be known, becoming as he waxed older a praiser of the bygone time, in disparagement of the present, was accustomed to talk with great contempt of modern smugglers and their paltry adventures, though he candidly confessed that the difficulties with which they had to contend were materially increased. As he was, in every other respect, a most loyal character, it grieves us to add, that in adverting to this fact, he would occasionally speak in most irreverent

terms of the Government, questioning their right to establish either customs or excise in the first instance, stigmatizing the Preventive Service as a rascally innovation, and condemning the Coast Blockade altogether as a monstrous act of tyranny and oppression, which hardly gave the honest free-trader a chance of working a crop once in a twelvemonth.

About the time that Henry purchased the farm near Southampton, he received a letter from Mrs. Penguin, at Cork, confessing the falsehood and baseness of all the malignant slanders she had so industriously circulated against him, imploring his forgiveness in the most abject terms, stating that her paramour had deserted her for another woman, after robbing her of every shilling she possessed, and even leaving her liable for debts to a considerable amount, under which deplorable circumstances, since she dared not write to her injured husband, and had not a friend in the world, she supplicated Henry to extricate her from her difficulties, most solemnly promising, if he consented, to lead an amended life for the future. Only following the dictates of his own bene-

volent heart, when he obeyed the Christian precept of returning good for evil, Henry immediately dispatched a person to Cork to release her from her embarrassments, and accompany her back to England, where he not only reconciled her to her mother, who was still living, but agreed to allow her an annual stipend, in addition to her small jointure, provided she should continue to deserve it by the propriety of her conduct. But the wretched woman was irreclaimable; she again eloped from her mother's house, and giving herself up to abandoned courses, became ultimately a prey to the want, misery, and utter degradation which they inevitably entail.

Previously to this occurrence, Henry had been relieved from another expected annuitant upon his bounty. Having convinced Barak Gunthorpe, before he left Southampton, that, from his habits of life, he could not be safely entrusted with any considerable sum of ready money; and that the great object of his existence, the double allowance of grog, would be much better secured to himself by a comfortable income, to be paid monthly, he prevailed upon him to give

up Welbeck's order for a thousand pounds, and gave instructions to an agent in London for settling upon him the promised annuity. Henry added some gold to that with which the man had been already provided for his conveyance to Newcastle; but while he loitered in the capital, his incurable addiction to drunkenness carrying him to one of his old haunts, it was discovered that he had a sum of gold about his person, to procure which he was attacked as he returned home at night by two of the ruffians with whom he had been tippling. Half intoxicated as he was, he made so desperate a resistance, that he baffled the villains of their prey; but he received such serious injury in the scuffle, that he was obliged to be conveyed to a hospital, where he expired about a fortnight afterwards.

If we have bestowed birth and great wealth upon Henry, it has been only in obedience to the inevitable course of our narrative, and not because we wished to inculcate a clumsy and false moral, by holding up such vulgar distinctions either as a worthy incitement, or as a satisfactory reward for the practice of virtue. The lesson we have wished to impress has a directly opposite

tendency. By the imperturbable equanimity of Henry under trials and oppressions of no common severity, we have endeavoured to show that virtue, however obscure, friendless, and traduced, is all-sufficing to itself, is superior to the injustice of the world, and can draw from its own bosom the materials of its own happiness; while in the example of Gideon Welbeck, we have sought to inculcate, that ill-gotten wealth, so far from conferring any peace of mind, does but quicken the apprehensions, sharpen the remorse, and aggravate the misery of its possessor. Riches ought to be deemed a means, not an end. It was thus that Henry considered them; and if they contributed, as they unquestionably did, to his own happiness, and that of a wife not less amiable and generous than himself, it was because their large fortune enabled them to contribute largely to the happiness of others. Limiting his own expenditure to the maintenance of an appropriate household and of a liberal, though unostentatious hospitality, he applied the whole residue of his great income to works of charity, benevolence, and public utility.

As he deemed the game laws one of the most monstrous insults of tyranny, considering the total disparity of the object, he rendered them innocuous upon his own property, by destroying the preserves, and throwing open his manors ; while he laboured to persuade the neighbouring gentry, that the self-punishing severity of their enactments was an incitement to violence, bloodshed, and crime, without effecting the prevention of poaching. Never was there a more ardent and munificent philanthropist than Henry Welbeck ; never did such a man possess a more congenial and enthusiastic helpmate than Emily, who accompanied her husband in all his charitable excursions, until the care of her infant family gave her a still more delightful occupation at home ; and never were such exalted pursuits rewarded with a happiness more pure, unalloyed, and exquisite, than that which blessed the career of Henry and Emily Welbeck.

Reader ! in perusing works of fiction, it may have been your chance to encounter a hero who has been dubbed with the title of a gentleman,

from his having employed a fashionable tailor, from his adroitness in tying a cravat, from his moving in an elevated sphere of life, from his proficiency in the hollow courtesies and hypocritical urbanity of polished society, from his glib and graceful fluency in a certain conventional slang, termed polite conversation, or from other superficial modes and forms of deportment which, when they do not represent the real feelings of the heart, are but as the deceitful stamp and gilding which, so long as it is not brought to the test or the assay, may give to the basest metal the currency of pure gold. A counterfeit gentleman of this class will not hesitate at a falsehood for the purpose of entrapping his friend in the sale of a horse ; he may become perjured by the violation of his marriage vow ; he may incur debts without the smallest prospect of repaying them ; he may seduce the wife of his friend, and afterwards shoot him through the body in the process of affording him “ the satisfaction of a gentleman ;”—for the miserable gratification of his heartless vanity, he may gain the affections of an inexperienced girl, and then leave her to pine and wither away in life-long anguish : in

his selfish and sensual career, he may pass through the world without leaving it in any one respect the wiser or the better for his existence ; and yet it shall not dream of withholding from him the title of a gentleman and a man of honour.

Not such a gentleman, and not a man of such honour, was Henry Welbeck. Neither depending upon externals, nor upon adventitious aid of any sort, his gentility sprung from a heart that was earnest and sincere, gentle, generous, and brave ; and what urbanity, we would ask, what polish, what courtesy, can be so pure, gracious, and uniform, as that which, emanating from the overflowing benevolence of the soul, derives its patent of gentility from Heaven ? Despising the frivolities of fashion, he still preserved an almost quaker-like simplicity of garb ; but that over-formality of expression, and those little eccentricities of opinion, or demeanour, which, it may have been observed, became latterly less marked and prominent, were finally softened or subdued, by a more enlarged intercourse with the world, and, like the weeds which the farmer eradicates and burns, only

served to fructify the soil upon which they grew. Democritus declared, that he would prefer the discovery of the cause of one of the works of Nature to the diadem of Persia : and Henry might have averred with equal truth, that he would prefer the removal of a single human misery, to the possession of all the dignities and distinctions upon earth. In accordance with this philanthropical sentiment, he went about continually doing good, living for others, rather than for himself, acting as the steward, more than as the proprietor of his fine fortune ; banishing want, misery, and sickness, and, in many instances, reforming vice itself, wherever he came. If the code of fashion will not allow him to have been a perfect gentleman, it cannot deny him the more exalted merit of having been a good Christian ; not the nominal Christian, however, who, forgetting the spirit in the letter of the Gospel, limits his narrow view to forms, tenets, or modes of faith, for upon this latter point he held with Pope, that “ His can’t be wrong, whose life is in the right :” nor was he one who embittered his own mind, and learnt to hate his fellow-creatures, much more certainly than to love God,

by indulging in theological disputes, for he fully agreed upon this subject with Sir William Temple, that all such controversies as can never end, had much better never begin. Christianity appeared to him the most sublime, when it elevated its possessor into the character of an all-embracing humanist: he seldom talked religion, but never failed to practise it; and if, in his active benevolence, he had not time to pray so often as others, he had the consolation of knowing that thousands were perpetually praying for him. Inflexible in his adherence to veracity, invariably returning good for evil, pure in his life, unsubdued by the most trying temptations, liable to few infirmities of temper or of passion, undaunted and indomitable amidst wrongs, reverses, and oppression, uncorrupted by prosperity and wealth, possessing in his sense of religious duty that high moral courage which enabled him to despise the savage sophistries of the duellist, and a zealous friend to the liberties, enlightenment, and happiness of the whole human race, all of whom he contemplated as his brethern, we offer Henry Welbeck to the world.

in all the essential points of his character, as a specimen of a gentleman and a Christian, fully aware that his claim to these titles may be disputed by some, and only presuming to add, that he embodies forth the humble, and, perhaps, the mistaken conceptions of the writer.

THE END.

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